

Cawein Madison Julius

# A Voice on the Wind, and Other Poems



Madison Cawein

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and Other Poems**

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## Содержание

PROEM	5
A VOICE ON THE WIND	6
THE LAND OF HEARTS MADE WHOLE	8
THE WIND OF WINTER	11
THE WIND OF SUMMER	13
THE SPIRIT OF THE FOREST SPRING	15
TO THE LEAF-CRICKET	16
THE OWLET	18
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	20

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## **A Voice on the Wind, and Other Poems**

### **PROEM**

Oh, for a soul that fulfills  
Music like that of a bird!  
Thrilling with rapture the hills,  
Heedless if any one heard.

Or, like the flower that blooms  
Lone in the midst of the trees,  
Filling the woods with perfumes,  
Careless if any one sees.

Or, like the wandering wind,  
Over the meadows that swings,  
Bringing wild sweets to mankind,  
Knowing not that which it brings.

Oh, for a way to impart  
Beauty, no matter how hard!  
Like unto nature, whose art  
Never once dreams of reward.

## A VOICE ON THE WIND

She walks with the wind on the windy height  
When the rocks are loud and the waves are white,  
And all night long she calls through the night,  
"O, my children, come home!"  
Her bleak gown, torn as a tattered cloud,  
Tosses around her like a shroud,  
While over the deep her voice rings loud, —  
"O, my children, come home, come home!  
O, my children, come home!"

Who is she who wanders alone,  
When the wind drives sheer and the rain is blown?  
Who walks all night and makes her moan,  
"O, my children, come home!"  
Whose face is raised to the blinding gale;  
Whose hair blows black and whose eyes are pale,  
While over the world is heard her wail, —  
"O, my children, come home, come home!  
O, my children, come home!"

She walks with the wind in the windy wood;  
The sad rain drips from her hair and hood,  
And her cry sobs by, like a ghost pursued,  
"O, my children, come home!"  
"O, my children, come home!"  
Where the trees are gaunt and the rocks are drear,  
The owl and the fox crouch down in fear,  
While wild through the wood her voice they hear, —  
"O, my children, come home, come home!  
O, my children, come home!"

Who is she who shudders by  
When the boughs blow bare and the dead leaves fly?  
Who walks all night with her wailing cry,  
"O, my children, come home!"  
Who, strange of look, and wild of tongue,  
With pale feet wounded and hands wan-wrung,  
Sweeps on and on with her cry, far-flung, —  
"O, my children, come home, come home!  
O, my children, come home!"

'Tis the Spirit of Autumn, no man sees,  
The mother of Death and Mysteries,  
Who cries on the wind all night to these,  
"O, my children, come home!"

The Spirit of Autumn, pierced with pain,  
Calling her children home again,  
Death and Dreams, through ruin and rain,  
"O, my children, come home, come home!  
O, my children, come home!"

## THE LAND OF HEARTS MADE WHOLE

Do you know the way that goes  
Over fields of rue and rose, —  
Warm of scent and hot of hue,  
Roofed with heaven's bluest blue, —  
To the Vale of Dreams Come True?

Do you know the path that twines,  
Banked with elder-bosks and vines,  
Under boughs that shade a stream,  
Hurrying, crystal as a gleam,  
To the Hills of Love a-Dream?

Tell me, tell me, have you gone  
Through the fields and woods of dawn,  
Meadowlands and trees that roll,  
Great of grass and huge of bole,  
To the Land of Hearts Made Whole?

On the way, among the fields,  
Poppies lift vermilion shields,  
In whose hearts the golden Noon,  
Murmuring her drowsy tune,  
Rocks the sleepy bees that croon.

On the way, amid the woods,  
Mandrakes muster multitudes,  
'Mid whose blossoms, white as tusk,  
Glides the glimmering Forest-Dusk,  
With her fluttering moths of musk.

Here you hear the stealthy stir  
Of shy lives of hoof and fur;  
Harmless things that hide and peer,  
Hearts that sucked the milk of fear —  
Fox and rabbit, squirrel and deer.

Here you see the mossy flight  
Of faint forms that love the night —  
Whippoorwill- and owlet-things,  
Whose far call before you brings  
Wonder-worlds of happenings.

Now in sunlight, now in shade,  
Water, like a brandished blade,  
Foaming forward, wild of flight,



Startles then arrests the sight,  
Whirling steely loops of light.

Thro' the tree-tops, down the vale,  
Breezes pass and leave a trail  
Of cool music that the birds,  
Following in happy herds,  
Gather up in twittering words.

Blossoms, frail and manifold,  
Strew the way with pearl and gold;  
Blurs, that seem the darling print  
Of the Springtime's feet, or glint  
Of her twinkling gown's torn tint.

There the myths of old endure:  
Dreams that are the world-soul's cure;  
Things that have no place or play  
In the facts of Everyday  
'Round your presence smile and sway.

Suddenly your eyes may see,  
Stepping softly from her tree,  
Slim of form and wet with dew,  
The brown dryad; lips the hue  
Of a berry bit into.

You may mark the naiad rise  
From her pool's reflected skies;  
In her gaze the heaven that dreams,  
Starred, in twilight-haunted streams,  
Mixed with water's grayer gleams.

You may see the laurel's girth,  
Big of bloom, give fragrant birth  
To the oread whose hair,  
Musk and darkness, light and air,  
Fills the hush with wonder there.

You may mark the rocks divide,  
And the faun before you glide,  
Piping on a magic reed,  
Sowing many a music seed,  
From which bloom and mushroom bead.

Of the rain and sunlight born,  
Young of beard and young of horn,  
You may see the satyr lie,  
With a very knowing eye,

Teaching youngling birds to fly.

These shall cheer and follow you  
Through the Vale of Dreams Come True;  
Wind-like voices, leaf-like feet;  
Forms of mist and hazy heat,  
In whose pulses sunbeams beat.

Lo! you tread enchanted ground!  
From the hollows all around  
Elf and spirit, gnome and fay,  
Guide your feet along the way  
Till the dewy close of day.

Then beside you, jet on jet,  
Emerald-hued or violet,  
Flickering swings a firefly light,  
Aye to guide your steps a-right  
From the valley to the height.

Steep the way is; when at last  
Vale and wood and stream are passed,  
From the heights you shall behold  
Panther heavens of spotted gold  
Tiger-tawny deeps unfold.

You shall see on stocks and stones  
Sunset's bell-deep color tones  
Fallen; and the valleys filled  
With dusk's purple music, spilled  
On the silence rapture-thrilled.

Then, as answering bell greets bell,  
Night ring in her miracle  
Of the doméd dark, o'er-rolled,  
Note on note, with starlight cold,  
'Twixt the moon's broad peal of gold.

On the hill-top Love-a-Dream  
Shows you then her window-gleam;  
Brings you home and folds your soul  
In the peace of vale and knoll,  
In the Land of Hearts Made Whole.

## THE WIND OF WINTER

The Winter Wind, the wind of death,  
Who knocked upon my door,  
Now through the key-hole entereth,  
Invisible and hoar;  
He breathes around his icy breath  
And treads the flickering floor.

I heard him, wandering in the night,  
Tap at my window pane,  
With ghostly fingers, snowy white,  
I heard him tug in vain,  
Until the shuddering candle-light  
With fear did cringe and strain.

The fire, awakened by his voice,  
Leapt up with frantic arms,  
Like some wild babe that greets with noise  
Its father home who storms,  
With rosy gestures that rejoice  
And crimson kiss that warms.

Now in the hearth he sits and, drowned  
Among the ashes, blows;  
Or through the room goes stealing 'round  
On cautious-stepping toes,  
Deep mantled in the drowsy sound  
Of night that sleets and snows.

And oft, like some thin fairy-thing,  
The stormy hush amid,  
I hear his captive trebles ring  
Beneath the kettle's lid;  
Or now a harp of elfland string  
In some dark cranny hid.

Again I hear him, imp-like, whine  
Cramped in the gusty flue;  
Or knotted in the resinous pine  
Raise goblin cry and hue,  
While through the smoke his eyeballs shine,  
A sooty red and blue.

At last I hear him, nearing dawn,  
Take up his roaring broom,  
And sweep wild leaves from wood and lawn,

And from the heavens the gloom,  
To show the gaunt world lying wan,  
And morn's cold rose a-bloom.

## THE WIND OF SUMMER

From the hills and far away  
All the long, warm summer day  
Comes the wind and seems to say:

"Come, oh, come! and let us go  
Where the meadows bend and blow,  
Waving with the white-tops' snow.

"Neath the hyssop-colored sky  
'Mid the meadows we will lie  
Watching the white clouds roll by;

"While your hair my hands shall press  
With a cooling tenderness  
Till your grief grows less and less.

"Come, oh, come! and let us roam  
Where the rock-cut waters comb  
Flowing crystal into foam.

"Under trees whose trunks are brown,  
On the banks that violets crown,  
We will watch the fish flash down;

"While your ear my voice shall soothe  
With a whisper soft and smooth  
Till your care shall wax uncouth.

"Come! where forests, line on line,  
Armies of the oak and pine,  
Scale the hills and shout and shine.

"We will wander, hand in hand,  
Ways where tall the toadstools stand,  
Mile-stones white of Fairyland.

"While your eyes my lips shall kiss,  
Dewy as a wild rose is,  
Till they gaze on naught but bliss.

"On the meadows you will hear,  
Leaning low your spirit ear,  
Cautious footsteps drawing near.

"You will deem it but a bee,

Murmuring soft and sleepily,  
Till your inner sight shall see

"'Tis a presence passing slow,  
All its shining hair ablow,  
Through the white-tops' tossing snow.

"By the waters, if you will,  
And your inmost soul be still,  
Melody your ears shall fill.

"You will deem it but the stream  
Rippling onward in a dream,  
Till upon your gaze shall gleam

"Arm of spray and throat of foam —  
'Tis a spirit there aroam  
Where the radiant waters comb.

"In the forest, if you heed,  
You shall hear a magic reed  
Sow sweet notes like silver seed.

"You will deem your ears have heard  
Stir of tree or song of bird,  
Till your startled eyes are blurred

"By a vision, instant seen,  
Naked gold and beryl green,  
Glimmering bright the boughs between.

"Follow me! and you shall see  
Wonder-worlds of mystery  
That are only known to me!"

Thus outside my city door  
Speaks the Wind its wildwood lore,  
Speaks and lo! I go once more.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE FOREST SPRING

Over the rocks she trails her locks,  
Her mossy locks that drip, drip, drip;  
Her sparkling eyes smile at the skies  
In friendship-wise and fellowship;  
While the gleam and glance of her countenance  
Lull into trance the woodland places,  
As over the rocks she trails her locks,  
Her dripping locks that the long fern graces.

She pours clear ooze from her heart's cool cruse,  
Its crystal cruse that drips, drips, drips;  
And all the day its diamond spray  
Is heard to play from her finger-tips;  
And the slight soft sound makes haunted ground  
Of the woods around that the sunlight laces,  
As she pours clear ooze from her heart's cool cruse,  
Its dripping cruse that no man traces.

She swims and swims with glimmering limbs,  
With lucid limbs that drip, drip, drip;  
Where beechen boughs build a leafy house  
For her form to drowse or her feet to trip;  
And the liquid beat of her rippling feet  
Makes three-times sweet the forest mazes,  
As she swims and swims with glimmering limbs,  
With dripping limbs through the twilight's hazes.

Then wrapped in deeps of the wild she sleeps,  
She whispering sleeps and drips, drips, drips;  
Where moon and mist wreath neck and wrist,  
While, starry-whist, through the night she slips;  
And the heavenly dream of her soul makes gleam  
The falls that stream and the foam that races,  
As wrapped in deeps of the wild she sleeps,  
She dripping sleeps or starward gazes.

## TO THE LEAF-CRICKET

### I

Small twilight singer  
Of dew and mist: thou ghost-gray, gossamer winger  
Of dusk's dim glimmer,  
How cool thy note sounds; how thy wings of shimmer  
Vibrate, soft-sighing,  
Meseems, for Summer that is dead or dying.  
I stand and listen,  
And at thy song the garden-beds, that glisten  
With rose and lily,  
Seem touched with sadness; and the tuberose chilly,  
Breathing around its cold and colorless breath,  
Fills the pale evening with wan hints of death.

### II

I see thee quaintly  
Beneath the leaf; thy shell-shaped winglets faintly —  
As thin as spangle  
Of cobwebbed rain – held up at airy angle;  
I hear thy tinkle,  
Thy fairy notes, the silvery stillness sprinkle;  
Investing wholly  
The moonlight with divinest melancholy:  
Until, in seeming,  
I see the Spirit of the Summer dreaming  
Amid her ripened orchards, apple-strewn,  
Her great, grave eyes fixed on the harvest-moon.

### III

As dew-drops beady,  
As mist minute, thy notes ring low and reedy:  
The vaguest vapor  
Of melody, now near; now, like some taper  
Of sound, far fading —  
Thou will-o'-wisp of music aye evading.  
Among the bowers,



The fog-washed stalks of Autumn's weeds and flowers,  
By hill and hollow,  
I hear thy murmur and in vain I follow —  
Thou jack-o'-lantern voice, thou elfin cry,  
Thou dirge, that tellest Beauty she must die.

#### IV

And when the frantic  
Wild winds of Autumn with the dead leaves antic;  
And walnuts scatter  
The mire of lanes; and dropping acorns patter  
In grove and forest,  
Like some frail grief, with the rude blast thou warrest,  
Sending thy slender  
Far cry against the gale, that, rough, untender,  
Untouched of sorrow,  
Sweeps thee aside, where, haply, I to-morrow  
Shall find thee lying, tiny, cold and crushed,  
Thy weak wings folded and thy music hushed.

## THE OWLET

### I

When dusk is drowned in drowsy dreams,  
And slow the hues of sunset die;  
When firefly and moth go by,  
And in still streams the new-moon gleams,  
A sickle in the sky;  
Then from the hills there comes a cry,  
The owlet's cry;  
A shivering voice that sobs and screams,  
That, frightened, screams:

"Who is it, who is it, who?  
Who rides through the dusk and dew,  
With a pair o' horns,  
As thin as thorns,  
And face a bubble blue?  
Who, who, who!  
Who is it, who is it, who?"

### II

When night has dulled the lily's white,  
And opened wide the primrose eyes;  
When pale mists rise and veil the skies,  
And 'round the height in whispering flight  
The night-wind sounds and sighs;  
Then in the woods again it cries,  
The owlet cries;  
A shivering voice that calls in fright,  
In maundering fright:

"Who is it, who is it, who?  
Who walks with a shuffling shoe,  
'Mid the gusty trees,  
With a face none sees,  
And a form as ghostly too?  
Who, who, who!  
Who is it, who is it, who?"

III

When midnight leans a listening ear  
And tinkles on her insect lutes;

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