

Cawein Madison Julius

# Shapes and Shadows



Madison Cawein

**Shapes and Shadows**

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## Under the Stars and Stripes

High on the world did our fathers of old,  
Under the stars and stripes,  
Blazon the name that we now must uphold,  
Under the stars and stripes.  
Vast in the past they have builded an arch  
Over which Freedom has lighted her torch.  
Follow it! Follow it! Come, let us march  
Under the stars and stripes!

We in whose bodies the blood of them runs,  
Under the stars and stripes,  
We will acquit us as sons of their sons,  
Under the stars and stripes.  
Ever for justice, our heel upon wrong,  
We in the light of our vengeance thrice strong!  
Rally together! Come tramping along  
Under the stars and stripes!

Out of our strength and a nation's great need,  
Under the stars and stripes,  
Heroes again as of old we shall breed,  
Under the stars and stripes.  
Broad to the winds be our banner unfurled!  
Straight in Spain's face let defiance be hurled!  
God on our side, we will battle the world  
Under the stars and stripes!

*Madison Cawein.*

*From "Poems of American Patriotism," selected by R. L. Paget.*

## The Dedication

*Ah, not for us the Heavens that hold  
God's message of Promethean fire!  
The Flame that fell on bards of old  
To hallow and inspire.  
Yet let the Soul dream on and dare  
No less Song's height that these possess:  
We can but fail; and may prepare  
The way to some success.*



## The Evanescent Beautiful

Day after Day, young with eternal beauty,  
Pays flowery duty to the month and clime;  
Night after night erects a vasty portal  
Of stars immortal for the march of Time.

But where are now the Glory and the Rapture,  
That once did capture me in cloud and stream?  
Where now the Joy that was both speech and silence?  
Where the beguillance that was fact and dream?

I know that Earth and Heaven are as golden  
As they of olden made me feel and see;  
Not in themselves is lacking aught of power  
Through star and flower – something's lost in me.

*Return! Return! I cry, O Visions vanished,  
O Voices banished, to my Soul again!—*  
The near Earth blossoms and the far Skies glisten,  
I look and listen, but, alas! in vain.

## August

### I

Clad on with glowing beauty and the peace,  
Benign, of calm maturity, she stands  
Among her meadows and her orchard-lands,  
And on her mellowing gardens and her trees,  
Out of the ripe abundance of her hands,  
Bestows increase  
And fruitfulness, as, wrapped in sunny ease,  
Blue-eyed and blonde she goes,  
Upon her bosom *Summer's* richest rose.

### II

And he who follows where her footsteps lead,  
By hill and rock, by forest-side and stream,  
Shall glimpse the glory of her visible dream,  
In flower and fruit, in rounded nut and seed:  
She in whose path the very shadows gleam;  
Whose humblest weed  
Seems lovelier than *June's* loveliest flower, indeed,  
And sweeter to the smell  
Than *April's* self within a rainy dell.

### III

Hers is a sumptuous simplicity  
Within the fair Republic of her flowers,  
Where you may see her standing hours on hours,  
Breast-deep in gold, soft-holding up a bee  
To her hushed ear; or sitting under bowers  
Of greenery,  
A butterfly a-tilt upon her knee;  
Or, lounging on her hip,  
Dancing a cricket on her finger-tip.



#### IV

Aye, let me breathe hot scents that tell of you:  
The hoary catnip and the meadow-mint,  
On which the honour of your touch doth print  
Itself as odour. Let me drink the hue  
Of ironweed and mist-flow'r here that hint,  
With purple and blue,  
The rapture that your presence doth imbue  
Their inmost essence with,  
Immortal though as transient as a myth.

#### V

Yea, let me feed on sounds that still assure  
Me where you hide: the brooks', whose happy din  
Tells where, the deep retired woods within,  
Disrobed, you bathe; the birds', whose drowsy lure  
Tells where you slumber, your warm-nestling chin  
Soft on the pure  
Pink cushion of your palm ... What better cure  
For care and memory's ache  
Than to behold you so and watch you wake!

## The Higher Brotherhood

To come in touch with mysteries  
Of beauty idealizing Earth,  
Go seek the hills, grown old with trees,  
The old hills wise with death and birth.

There you may hear the heart that beats  
In streams, where music has its source;  
And in wild rocks of green retreats  
Behold the silent soul of force.

Above the love that emanates  
From human passion, and reflects  
The flesh, must be the love that waits  
On Nature, whose high call elects

None to her secrets save the few  
Who hold that facts are far less real  
Than dreams, with which all facts indue  
Themselves approaching the Ideal.

## Gramarye

There are some things that entertain me more  
Than men or books; and to my knowledge seem  
A key of Poetry, made of magic lore  
Of childhood, opening many a fabled door  
Of superstition, mystery, and dream  
Enchantment locked of yore.

For, when through dusking woods my pathway lies,  
Often I feel old spells, as o'er me flits  
The bat, like some black thought that, troubled, flies  
Round some dark purpose; or before me cries  
The owl that, like an evil conscience, sits  
A shadowy voice and eyes.

Then, when down blue canals of cloudy snow  
The white moon oars her boat, and woods vibrate  
With crickets, lo, I hear the hautboys blow  
Of Elf-land; and when green the fireflies glow,  
See where the goblins hold a Fairy Fête  
With lanthorn row on row.

Strange growths, that ooze from long-dead logs and spread  
A creamy fungus, where the snail, uncoiled,  
And fat slug feed at morn, are Pixy bread  
Made of the yeasted dew; the lichens red,  
Besides these grown, are meat the Brownies broiled  
Above a glow-worm bed.

The smears of silver on the webs that line  
The tree's crook'd roots, or stretch, white-wove, within  
The hollow stump, are stains of Faëry wine  
Spilled on the cloth where Elf-land sat to dine,  
When night beheld them drinking, chin to chin,  
O' the moon's fermented shine.

What but their chairs the mushrooms on the lawn,  
Or toadstools hidden under flower and fern,  
Tagged with the dotting dew! – With knees updrawn  
Far as his eyes, have I not come upon  
Puck seated there? but scarcely 'round could turn  
Ere, presto! he was gone.

And so though Science from the woods hath tracked  
The Elfin; and with prosy lights of day  
Unhallowed all his haunts; and, dulling, blacked

Our eyesight, still hath Beauty never lacked  
For seers yet; who, in some wizard way,  
Prove Fancy real as Fact.

## Dreams

My thoughts have borne me far away  
To Beauties of an older day,  
Where, crowned with roses, stands the Dawn,  
Striking her seven-stringed barbiton  
Of flame, whose chords give being to  
The seven colours, hue for hue;  
The music of the colour-dream  
She builds the day from, beam by beam.

My thoughts have borne me far away  
To Myths of a diviner day,  
Where, sitting on the mountain, Noon  
Sings to the pines a sun-soaked tune  
Of rest and shade and clouds and skies,  
Wherein her calm dreams idealize  
Light as a presence, heavenly fair,  
Sleeping with all her beauty bare.

My thoughts have borne me far away  
To Visions of a wiser day,  
Where, stealing through the wilderness,  
Night walks, a sad-eyed votaress,  
And prays with mystic words she hears  
Behind the thunder of the spheres,  
The starry utterance that's hers,  
With which she fills the Universe.

## The Old House

Quaint and forgotten, by an unused road,  
An old house stands: around its doors the dense  
Blue iron-weeds grow high;  
The chipmunks make a highway of its fence;  
And on its sunken flagstones slug and toad  
Silent as lichens lie.

The timid snake upon its hearth's cool sand  
Sleeps undisturbed; the squirrel haunts its roof;  
And in the clapboard sides  
Of closets, dim with many a spider woof,  
Like the uncertain tapping of a hand,  
The beetle-borer hides.

Above its lintel, under mossy eaves,  
The mud-wasps build their cells; and in the floor  
Of its neglected porch  
The black bees nest. Through each deserted door,  
Vague as a phantom's footsteps, steal the leaves,  
And dropped cones of the larch.

But come with me when sunset's magic old  
Transforms the ruin of that ancient house;  
When windows, one by one, —  
Like age's eyes, that youth's love-dreams arouse, —  
Grow lairs of fire; and glad mouths of gold  
Its wide doors, in the sun.

Or let us wait until each rain-stained room  
Is carpeted with moonlight, patterned oft  
With the deep boughs o'erhead;  
And through the house the wind goes rustling soft,  
As might the ghost — a whisper of perfume —  
Of some sweet girl long dead.

## The Rock

Here, at its base, in dinged deeps  
Of spice-bush, where the ivy creeps,  
The cold spring scoops its hollow;  
And there three mossy stepping-stones  
Make ripple murmurs; undertones  
Of foam that blend and follow  
With voices of the wood that drones.

The quail pipes here when noons are hot;  
And here, in coolness sunlight-shot  
Beneath a roof of briers,  
The red-fox skulks at close of day;  
And here at night, the shadows gray  
Stand like Franciscan friars,  
With moonbeam beads whereon they pray.

Here yawns the ground-hog's dark-dug hole;  
And there the tunnel of the mole  
Heaves under weed and flower;  
A sandy pit-fall here and there  
The ant-lion digs and lies a-lair;  
And here, for sun and shower,  
The spider weaves a silvery snare.

The poison-oak's rank tendrils twine  
The rock's south side; the trumpet-vine,  
With crimson bugles sprinkled,  
Makes green its eastern side; the west  
Is rough with lichens; and, gray-pressed  
Into an angle wrinkled,  
The hornets hang an oblong nest.

The north is hid from sun and star,  
And here, – like an Inquisitor  
Of Faëry Inquisition,  
That roots out Elf-land heresy, —  
Deep in the rock, with mystery  
Cowled for his grave commission,  
The Owl sits magisterially.

## Rain

Around, the stillness deepened; then the grain  
Went wild with wind; and every briery lane  
Was swept with dust; and then, tempestuous black,  
Hillward the tempest heaved a monster back,  
That on the thunder leaned as on a cane;  
And on huge shoulders bore a cloudy pack,  
That gullied gold from many a lightning-crack:  
One great drop splashed and wrinkled down the pane,  
And then field, hill, and wood were lost in rain.

At last, through clouds, – as from a cavern hewn  
Into night's heart, – the sun burst, angry roon;  
And every cedar, with its weight of wet,  
Against the sunset's fiery splendour set,  
Frightened to beauty, seemed with rubies strewn;  
Then in drenched gardens, like sweet phantoms met,  
Dim odours rose of pink and mignonette;  
And in the East a confidence, that soon  
Grew to the calm assurance of the Moon.



## Standing-Stone Creek

A weed-grown slope, whereon the rain  
Has washed the brown rocks bare,  
Leads tangled from a lonely lane  
Down to a creek's broad stair  
Of stone, that, through the solitude,  
Winds onward to a quiet wood.

An intermittent roof of shade  
The beech above it throws;  
Along its steps a balustrade  
Of beauty builds the rose;  
In which, a stately lamp of green  
At intervals the cedar's seen.

The water, carpeting each ledge  
Of rock that runs across,  
Glints 'twixt a flow'r-embroidered edge  
Of ferns and grass and moss;  
And in its deeps the wood and sky  
Seem patterns of the softest dye.

Long corridors of pleasant dusk  
Within the house of leaves  
It reaches; where, on looms of musk,  
The ceaseless locust weaves  
A web of summer; and perfume  
Trails a sweet gown from room to room.

Green windows of the boughs, that swing,  
It passes, where the notes  
Of birds are glad thoughts entering,  
And butterflies are motes;  
And now a vista where the day  
Opens a door of wind and ray.

It is a stairway for all sounds  
That haunt the woodland sides;  
On which, boy-like, the southwind bounds,  
Girl-like, the sunbeam glides;  
And, like fond parents, following these,  
The oldtime dreams of rest and peace.

## The Moonmen

I stood in the forest on Huron Hill  
When the night was old and the world was still.

The Wind was a wizard who muttering strode  
In a raven cloak on a haunted road.

The Sound of Water, a witch who crooned  
Her spells to the rocks the rain had runed.

And the Gleam of the Dew on the fern's green tip  
Was a sylvan passing with robe a-drip.

The Light of the Stars was a glimmering maid  
Who stole, an elfin, from glade to glade.

The Scent of the Woods in the delicate air,  
A wildflower shape with chilly hair.

And Silence, a spirit who sat alone  
With a lifted finger and eyes of stone.

And it seemed to me these six were met  
To greet a greater who came not yet.

And the speech they spoke, that I listened to,  
Was the archetype of the speech I knew.

For the Wind clasped hands with the Water's rush,

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