

(A friend wrote saying that his homestead was incomplete without a poet sitting on the river's bank writing to the music of the waters.) I replied:

BY THE STREAM

We sat upon the river's bank,
My little girl and I;
We looked upon the flowing stream,
With tear-drops in our eye.
We'd had a little tiff—so sad
That pretty girl should cry!
She said she loved her little lad,
And hoped I'd better be to try.

She pointed out my weakest spot:
My human frailties weak;
She hit me hard—spared not a jot:
I was a human freak!
Of course I'd never looked inside,
To see what was within
To fit me well for husband-side,
I'd spent my life in spending "tin."

And now I asked for her sweet hand—
Her heart much sweeter still:
Her life to run 'long side of mine—
A home ruled sweetly by her will.
She thought, and thought and pondered on;
(Her gaze was still upon the water);
And I, I thought her words upon:—
Reform I would, because I oughter!

Said I: "You see how water flows
A-down this lovely river,
With rapids making it more dear,
As picture from the Giver!
The little "tiffs" the waters have
From rocks and boulders under,
They're but a momentary wave,—
They never *keep* the waters 'sunder.

Unite again, soon as they can
And flow, and flow away,
They've work to do for beast and man
That boulders cannot stay.
So let us cover up OUR tiffs,
I'll shape my life to your sweet prattle!
I'll buy a farm that's lying by
Like river this, and stock with cattle."

Her eyes she turned from off the river
And fixed them on my gaze;
And then she said: "I'm yours for ever—
I'll see you mend your naughty ways."
So off we scampered, arm-in-arm.
(O how I loved that artful Miss!)
I pressed her much; my heart was warm,
And sealed our compact with a kiss.