

Poems of Birds and Trees

THE HEART OF THE TREE

What does he plant who plants a tree?
He plants the friend of sun and sky;
He plants the flag of breezes free;
The shaft of beauty towering high;
He plants a home to heaven anigh.
For song and mother-croon of bird
In hushed and happy twilight
heard—

The treble of heaven's harmony—
These things he plants who plants a
tree.

He plants a home to heaven anigh.

What does he plant who plants a tree?
He plants cool shades and tender
rain,

And seed and bud of days to be,

And years that fade and flush again;

He plants the glory of the plain;

He plants the forest's heritage;

The harvest of a coming age;

The joy that unborn eyes shall see—

These things he plants who plants a
tree.

What does he plant who plants a tree?

He plants, in sap and leaf and wood,

In love of home and loyalty

And far-cast thought of civic good—

His blessings on the neighborhood.

Who in the hollow of his hand

Holds all the growth of all our
land—

A nation's growth from sea to sea

Stirs in his heart who plants a tree.

HENRY CUYLER BUNNER

THE THRUSH SONG

Hark to the song of the thrush,
At the fall of dusk and dew;
Piercing the twilight hush
Thrilling it through and through!
While the first stars twinkle, twinkle,
And the little leaves crinkle, crinkle,

Low as a rill,

Sweet as a bell,

Down from the hill,

Up from the dell,

And all for me and you!

List' to the song of the thrush,

From the shadows cool and deep;

Out from the underbrush,

Dim where the pixies creep!

While the winds grow crisper, crisper,

And the little leaves whisper, whisper,

Fine as a flute,

Blown at the morn,

Soft as a lute,

Clear as a horn;

A call to dreams and sleep!

—SELECTED

SUMMER IS NIGH

How do I know?

Why this very day

A robin sat

On a little spray,

And merrily sang

A song of May.

Jack Frost has fled

From the rippling brook,

And a trout peeped out

From his shady nook

A butterfly, too

Flew lazily by,

And the willow catkins

Shook from on high

Their yellow dust

As I passed by;

And so I know

That summer is nigh.

—SELECTED

TREES

I think that I shall never see

A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest

Against the earth's sweet flowing

breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,

And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear

A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;

Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,

But only God can make a tree.

—JOYCE KILMER

AN ARBOR DAY TREE

Dear little tree that we plant today,
What will you be when we're old and
gray?

"The savings bank of squirrel and
mouse,

For robin and wren an apartment
house,

The dressing room of the butterfly's
ball,

The locusts and katydid's concert hall,
The schoolboy's ladder in pleasant

June,

The schoolgirl's tent in July noon.

And my leaves shall whisper them
merrily,

A tale of the children who planted
me."

—YOUTH'S COMPANION

THE ROBIN

In the tall elm-trees sat the robin
bright,

Through the rainy April day,

And he caroled clear with a pure de-
light,

In the face of a sky so grey.

And the silver rain through the blos-
soms dropped

And fell on the robin's coat,

And his brave red breast, but he nev-
er stopped

Piping his cheerful note.

For, oh, the fields were green and glad,

And the blissful life was stirred

In the earth's wide breast, was full
and warm

In the heart of the little bird.

The rain-cloud lifted, the sunset light
Streamed wide over valley and hill;

As the plains of Heaven the land grew
bright,

And the warm south was still.

Then loud and clear called the happy
bird,

And rapturously he sang

Till wood and meadow and river side

With the jubilant echoes rang,

But the sun sank down in the quiet
west,

And he hushed his song at last;

All nature softly sank to rest

And the April day had passed.

—CELIA THAXTER

FOREST SONG

A song for the beautiful trees,

A song for the forest grand,

The pride of His centuries,

The garden of God's own hand.

Hurrah for the kingly oak,

The maple the forest queen

The lords of the emerald cloak,

The ladies of living green.

For the beautiful trees a song,

The peers of a glorious realm,

So brave, and majestic, and strong,

The linden, the ash and the elm.

Hurrah for the beechtree between

The hickory staunch at core

The locust so thorny and green,

And silvery sycamore.

So long as the rivers flow

So long as the mountains rise,

And shelter the earth below,

May the forest sing to the skies

Hurrah! for the beautiful trees,

Hurrah! for the forest grand,

The pride of His centuries,

The garden of God's own hand.

W. H. VENABLE