

***“Chester”***

# CHESTER HUGHES

*from his father*

*[James M. Hughes]*

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HIS LIFE STORY BEGAN IN  
TORONTO, MARCH 31st, 1888,  
AND ENDED IN BELGIUM  
NOVEMBER 15th, 1915

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## OUR MEMORIES.

Not as a soldier grim,  
But as a happy boy  
Will we remember him,  
Radiant with each new joy.

Not as a soldier grim,  
But as a winsome youth  
Will we remember him,  
Clear-eyed and loving truth.

Not as a soldier grim,  
But as a man upright  
Will we remember him,  
Glowing with hopeful light.

Yet—though our eyes be dim—  
Earnest and true and brave  
Will we remember him,  
Fighting life's best to save.

## CHESTER.

HE was the wind from the hillside,  
Bringing the balsam's perfume;  
He was the dawn of the morning,  
Clearing the mist-clouds of gloom.

He was the rock-bounded streamlet,  
Leaping in glee through the glen;  
He was the wide-flowing river,  
Bearing rare treasures to men.

He was the sun of the Summer,  
Giving new growth in the field;  
He was the harvest of Autumn,  
Rich in its bountiful yield.

He was the arms of the hemlock,  
Waking enchantment in me;  
He was the crimson-toned maple;  
He was the wave-crested sea.

He was the afterglow glory,  
Ending the day with delight;  
He was the moon's wondrous magic;  
He was the star-shine of night.

He was the flower of the Springtime;  
He was the pine's mystic tune;  
He was the spirit of Nature,  
Singing its joy-song in June.

So through the years will the streamlet,  
River and wave-crested sea,  
Dawnlight and sunshine and eve-glow,  
Star gleam and flower and tree,  
Bird song, and growth time, and wind breath,  
Whisper his sweetness to me.

## HIS UNFINISHED STORY.

I CANNOT know the story  
Of what you might have done;  
I can but dream of honors  
You would have earned, dear son.

But I shall keep the record  
Of how you did your part  
True to your highest, ever  
Deep in my happy heart.

Beauty of dawn and sunset,  
Glory of sky and sea,  
Grandness of star and mountain,  
Will bring you back to me.

Often in woodland pathway  
Beside me you will stand  
Tranquil and true, and tell me  
Of work that you had planned.

And life will aye be sweeter,  
Hope be more strong and clear,  
Faith more serene and vital,  
Because I feel you near.

## A TRUE DEMOCRAT.

WITH men of highest rank he stood serene;  
Comrade was he to men of lowly sphere;  
Brother to all whom men call "bad" or "mean,"  
He gave them fellowship their hearts to cheer.  
They found it easy to be true and clean  
When he was with them, and his smile sincere  
Made sad hearts sing and dark clouds disappear.

He knew that good must ever conquer wrong,  
Unless God fights for evil against right;  
He never feared that badness was so strong  
As on his moral power to put a blight,  
When with true brotherhood he helped along  
A hopeless outcast beaten in life's fight,  
And cheered him on his pathway to the light.

TO MY ONLY SON.

FREEDOM and honor called you,  
Nobly you made reply;  
For right and truth and justice  
Bravely you went to die.

You chose the life of service,  
Chose it yourself alone,  
And made the path of duty  
To God and man your own.

Killed on the field of battle  
Yonder across the sea,  
Dear son, I'll ever keep you  
Fondly in memory.

Boyhood of loving kinship,  
Youth of unfolding might,  
Manhood of faithful service,  
You made all life more bright.

Comrade, I longed to know you  
Till you were old and gray,  
That I might watch your progress  
Along life's upward way;

That I might keep the record  
Of life so well begun,  
And share with you the uplift  
Of triumphs you had won.

I shall dream on, beloved,  
Of deeds you might have done;  
Dream as I climb life's hillside  
To see the setting sun;

Climbing with clearer vision,  
And step more light and strong;  
Singing because I knew you  
A sweeter, grander song.

## DEAD !

LIFE'S supremest shock of sadness  
Dims my eyes with loving tears,  
But I know that glowing gladness  
Will be mine throughout the years.

Never shadow came nor sorrow  
From my happy-hearted boy,  
So through all the great to-morrow  
Memory will bring me joy :

Joy of honest, manly doing,  
Joy of service for his friend,  
Joy of upward path pursuing,  
Till he reached life's noble end.

Doing bravely sacred duty  
For the right and liberty.  
How could death have grander beauty?  
More triumphant dignity?

## SORROW AND JOY.

OH, yes! I'm sorry he was killed,  
My brave, my only son;  
But I am glad his life was filled  
With man's work nobly done.

I'm sad because he died so soon,  
But glad he lived so long,  
His heart with purpose high in tune,  
His soul serene and strong.

Regret oft drives its poisoned dart  
Into my breast, but then  
I think how well he did his part  
And I rejoice again.

The shadow of his loss I see;  
Sometimes the clouds hang low,  
But then his life light shines in me,  
And sets my heart aglow.

I'll smile, though loving tears may fall  
As pass the coming years;  
He heard and answered duty's call;—  
Mine are exultant tears.

## HIS LAST LETTER.

DATED the day before  
My brave son fell,  
Ere the dread cable said,  
"Killed by a shell."

Surely it must have come  
Straight from his tomb,  
Message of love and light  
To break the gloom.

Written two weeks ago  
"Somewhere" it said;  
"Living and working hard,"  
Now he is dead.

Manly his hopeful words  
Full of good cheer;  
Tender his thoughts of home,  
Home ever dear.

One note of sadness told  
His heart was sore;  
“ Baker, my chum, is blind—  
He fights no more.”

Message of faith and hope  
Last from my son!  
He lies across the sea—  
Life's work well done.

## MYSTERY AND GLORY.

THERE is mystery and glory  
In young life's untimely end,  
But we'll understand the story,  
And our tears and smiles will blend.

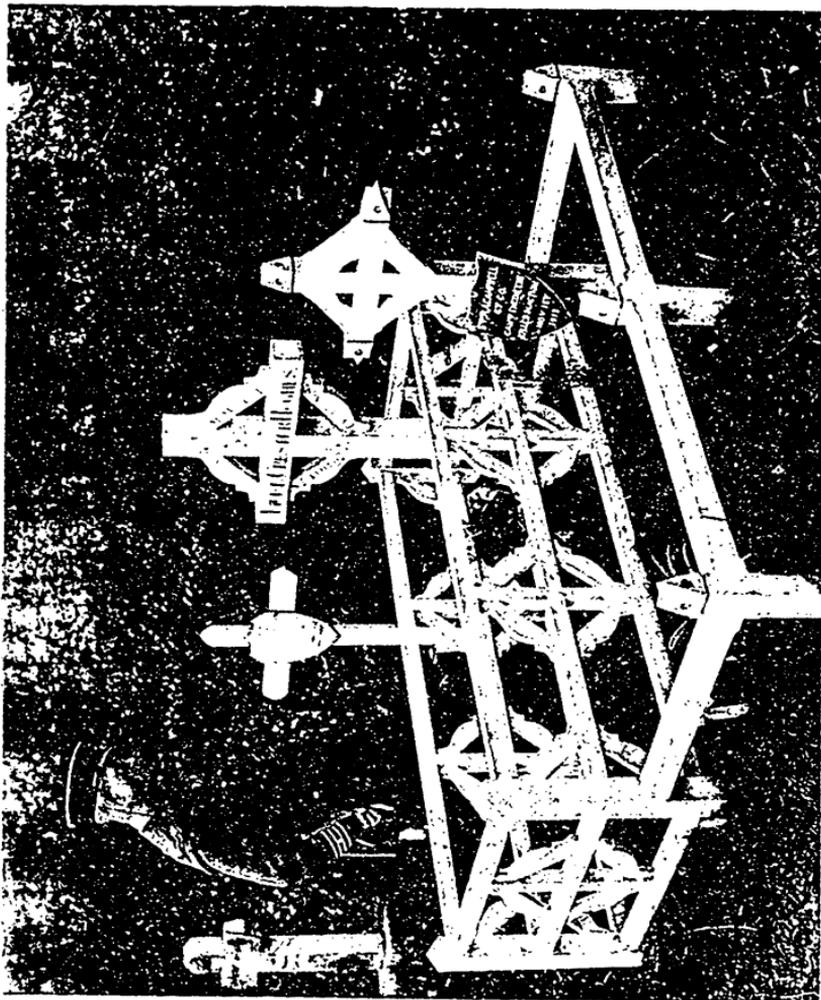
For the mystery will leave us,  
As the sadness disappears;  
And its pain will cease to grieve us  
In the sorrow-healing years.

Then the glory and the beauty  
Of the life that once was ours,  
Will guide us to higher duty  
And to more triumphant powers.

## LIFE AND DEATH.

SOME count their lives by days and years;  
True life is what we do  
To dry the founts of human tears,  
And lead to higher view.

Death is but life at rest awhile  
After the day is o'er,  
Awaiting with a tranquil smile  
The morn to work some more.



His body lies here in a hero's grave---  
He lives in the freedom he died to save.