

A Collection of Verse and Essays

**By
Mabel Elizabeth Mackie
(nee Savage)**

Mabel Elizabeth Mackie – Poetry and Essays

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Dedicated to
Cynthia Biccum
On behalf of a poet who
Did not live to see her work published



Mabel Elizabeth Savage

From a photo taken in 1912

Twenty-one years of age

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Mabel Elizabeth Mackie – Poetry and Essays

Introduction

My mother, christened Mabel Elizabeth Savage, was born in the Portsmouth, Hampshire in 1890, and came to Canada with her family in 1910 via the White Star Line from Liverpool to Boston. She was a person of artistic abilities who studied art, was an accomplished pianist and, as a pastime, wrote poetry and short essays. While she lived, I took only passing interest in her writing but on her death I inherited, among her personal effects, the manuscripts of much that she had composed. These resided in a file for many years until I decided to transcribe her work into a more ordered format.

Most of what she wrote was prompted by events in her life. *The Babe* was undoubtedly written on the birth of either my brother or myself. When my brother enlisted in the R.C.A.F. during World War II she expressed her anguish in the poem *The Son*, and later, when he received his combat wings, *The Flight of Youth*. The poems *Qualicum* and *Dream House* expressed her joy with two of the places she vacationed. The second poem refers to the home of a Reverend Dr. Unsworth in Beacon Hill Park, Victoria, BC. She was very close to her mother and sister, Dolly. The poem *Requiem* was certainly written in memory of one.

She was a deeply religious woman as may be observed from the subject matter of many of her writings. In that

regard the poem, *Walk Slowly* most certainly expressed her hope to one day be reunited with her husband, Alan, after his untimely death in 1964.

She was also fiercely loyal to her homeland which undoubtedly inspired the poems *The Voice of the People* (commemorating the coronation of George VI) and *Farewell to Churchill*.

The story *July Holiday* must have been taken from events that occurred in the family. I imagine it referred to holidays taken sometime around 1938. My brother, David, would have been eleven and I seven or eight. My mother always complained that she had wanted a girl, but was obliged to settle for two boys. I expect she indulged in the writer's liberty of substituting the longed for daughter at the expense of one of us. We did have cats that were pampered. The reference to the Fraser Canyon is interesting because at that time much of the road was a single lane. The business of passing an oncoming vehicle could be hair-raising at times and the journey was long and slow.

The essay on *Why I Love my Country, Canada* was likely written as a submission to some competition or similar public event. She did not trouble to attach a date to any of her work so it is difficult to determine when or why an item was written. This particular piece is not in any way spectacular, but I include it since it helps to explain something of her character and feelings.

Aftermath is a short account concerning a cousin, Graham Pitman, who was a piper in the Black Watch, and who

disappeared during service in World War I. He turned up many years later in Vancouver using the name, Donald Graham, and was recognized by his brother. It was determined that he had been a victim of “shell shock” or combat fatigue with a loss of memory from some terrible event. He bore scars from shrapnel wounds but, unfortunately, was never able to qualify for veteran assistance or pension because War Office records were never found that could establish his identity. He had, however, not lost his ability to play the Highland Warpipe and it was he who first inspired my love for that grand instrument. My mother, I suppose to avoid complication in the story, portrayed herself as a sister rather than the cousin which she was.

The other verses were, I suppose, inspired by events (such as the sad chronicle of Squeaky Gate) and memories of which I have no knowledge. I also lack the literary acumen to judge whether the writing is technically sound, but I can state with confidence that she succeeded in touching the emotions of the reader with much that she wrote.

Robin Bruce Mackie – November 30, 2003

Mabel Elizabeth Mackie – Poetry and Essays

The Babe

When morning comes, dear nestling one, you wake,
And all the world is beautiful for your dear sake;
For fledglings trill a trill for you



Mother 2

While sunbeams dance; you lie
and coo
A rhapsody of joy and love.

Sweetly you smile, you gentle,
cuddly one.
Smile on and coo
While I am quite content to lose
myself
Within your witching eyes of
blue.

When evening comes your eyelids droop, you weep.
I hold you close,
Then kiss your dewy eyes, your petalled cheek.
Then lay you in your little nest, For you must rest.
Though at your slightest cry, I come.
Softly you breathe, your little hands upturned.
Rest on my sweet,
While I, in rapture, gaze upon that blissful sight,
A babe asleep.

Little House of Dreams



Sketch by Mrs. Mackie

Oh, little house of dreams,
 what joy we found
 All in a garden fair,
Where rockeries with pansies sweet,
 For memories were there;
And nodding roses welcomed us
 With curtsies when we passed,
And windows opened to the stars
 When night came down at last.

Oh, little house of dreams,
Where sorrow found
A place within our walls,
And happiness and love as well
Seemed gone beyond recall,
And voiceless were the singing birds
Who trilled their songs so gay;
While moonbeams hid their silver light
For joy had gone away.

Oh, little house of dreams,
Where peace at last
Came in to be our guest.
We welcomed her with joyous arms
And there found happiness;
And then the garden bloomed again,
And silver throats trilled high,
While sunset found a smiling house beneath
An opal sky.

The Voice of the People

I see before me an abbey dim,
It throbs with the echo that centuries bring;
And I hear from the organ a whispering sigh,
Which swells to an anthem, then fades to die.
Then I hear a thunder of voices. They sing,
"The King is coming! The King! The King!"

I see before me that Abbey dim,
Which throbs with the echo that centuries bring;
And there, robed in purple, is one kneeling down,
On his royal head rests an Empire's crown.
I see his lips moving, though no voice is heard,
'Tis a vow that he whispers: "Your King. I serve."

I see in a palace, a noble man.
He has steadfast blue eyes and a trusty hand.
I see close beside him that Consort so true;
A daughter from Scotland, this queen he did woo.
I see him ride forth; again people sing,
"The King is coming! The King! The King!"

I listen, for out in the distance I hear
An echoing thunder of cheer upon cheer.
It gathers in volume; it circles above,
Then sinks to a murmur and whispers its love.
This, the voice of your people, Royal Sire, they sing-
"The King is coming! The King! The King!"

July Holiday

It was with a start that I noticed the date on the calendar. It was Monday morning, an exceedingly hot morning, and to be exact, the time was 8:30. We were now in July, and in three days time our family of four would be starting out on what we all ardently hoped would be the most perfect holiday we had ever had. Usually there was a last minute rush, with a frantic dash to town to purchase something which one of us “simply must have”. Somehow, we seem to be one of those families where last minute affairs insist on cropping up. But this year things were to be different. All our suitcases were to be decently packed and ready to be put in the car the evening previous to our exodus.

Kitycat, our pet pussy, was also to be handed over to an accommodating neighbour who promised to shut her securely in her basement till we and our car were well on our way. Other years pussy always managed to stage a scene on the back steps just as we would start to pull away. Explaining to the children that our neighbour would feed pussy and generally look out for her while we were on holidays meant not a thing to them. They merely howled themselves sick, all the while ejaculating, “Poor pussy, poor pussy will starve. Pussy wants a holiday too.” Finally my husband would lay down the law and say, “No more animals for this family, ever! I mean it!” and I would lean away over the front seat and say, “If you don’t stop that frightful noise instantly we’ll turn right round and go home

and we'll never go away again 'till you two have grown up."

Well, we would have no more of that to put up with. This morning, after looking at the calendar, I decided on a quick dash to town. There would be no racing from one store another, for the few things necessary to purchase could all be bought from the one store. "Wait for me," I called out, as my husband started toward the garage.

"O.K." he answered, "But make it snappy, because I'm already late".

I did make it snappy, though it was even then far too hot to do anything but crawl. My hat looked decidedly cockeyed, the way I slammed it on my head. But grabbing my bag and gloves I ran to the kitchen where Ronnie and I collided. "Here. What do you need most to take away with you?" I asked.

"Nothing!" he yelled, as he dashed out of the back door.

"Then what about you, darling?" I asked my eleven year old daughter, a sweet faced dainty little maid. She was already busily employed washing up the breakfast dishes. She was always such a willing worker that I had decided to purchase the prettiest swimsuit I could find, for her. I kissed her soft cheek and asked her if there was anything else she would like me to buy for her. But she raised her dreamy blue eyes to mine and answered, "Mamma, I'll not need anything if you would just allow us to take Kitycat along

with us when we go away; otherwise she will be so lonely. Ronnie wants to catch fish for her,” she added.

The car honked warningly. “Coming,” I answered, and grabbing up my gloves and bag and then having printed a kiss on my daughter’s soft cheek, I hurried out, calling back to her, “I won’t be long; back for lunch, dear.”

When finally the car purred along to his satisfaction, my husband relaxed enough for me to ask if there was anything he would like from the stores to take away. I said, “Now is the time to tell me for I’ll not be shopping after today”. This seemed to require serious thought. Finally, he said slowly, “Yes, I would like to take my slippers,” adding, “I missed not having them with me last year.”

“Yet, when we do take them, you never wear them and those you have now are such frightful objects.”

“Hm, I suppose they are rather shabby now you mention it.”

“Shabby!” I exclaimed, “They are horrible affairs! I wish you could see what they look like with my eyes. How about a new pair, the soft, comfy kind,” I suggested persuasively, knowing full well how my husband clung to those awful looking affairs he called slippers.

“I suppose I am really due for some,” he smiled, “Well, all right, but try and manage the same kind.” adding, “I suppose the stores do still carry that type of slipper

“Oh, of course. You’ll see, I’ll bring home an exact duplicate pair. I’ll put them right at the head of my list then I’m bound to remember them.”

After leaving the car, I sauntered along happily in spite of the heat which already was making itself felt and held promise of a scorching day as the hours progressed. However, I would be home long before then. A window full of shoes caught my eye as I sailed down Granville Street. “Better go right in here,” I thought, “and get the slippers.”

Inside the store, it was cool and restful. A very tall and dignified looking gentleman approached me and gave me to understand he was completely at my service. “I’d like to purchase a pair of slippers, please. Mens’ slippers. Size? Oh, yes, size nine,” in answer to his query. “Nothing harsh or leathery,” I added hastily. “My husband prefers soft and comfy feet. You know the kind,” I added brightly.

“If you will just be seated, madam.” He was a very serious salesman. It was actually nice to sit down and my mind roamed over a dozen little nothings, while my eyes idly took in the various shoppers. Then it suddenly seemed I had been there a long time. I looked at my watch; over ten minutes since I sat down, and where was my tall salesman, and what was he doing?. At last he came in view. Yes, in his hands he had exactly the kind I wanted. I said so, but they did look very small. “Are they nines?” I asked.

“Unfortunately, no, but they seem to be the only pair of the kind you want in the entire store. These are sixes.”

“But,” I protested, “my husband couldn’t possibly wear so small a size.”

“Not even if the toes were cut out? Madam must know how fashionable it has been of late years to have the toes cut out!” I had visions of my husband’s toes showing through the tops of the slippers he now wore, as well as through his socks. They looked anything but fashionable, so I merely shook my head

“Look here,” he said, “there’s nothing like fresh air on your feet when the weather is hot like it is today. I think you should give them a trial”.

“I think I should try elsewhere,” was my only answer to such an outrageous suggestion.

“Too bad,” he said, “too bad. For if you could have used them I’d cut the price a little. Frankly, I’m tired of seeing them around”.

I decided to try one of the department stores. Such stores usually carried every possible type of slipper. “I mustn’t spend too much time over one pair of slippers,” I told myself.

The department store men’s’ shoe department seemed very busy for so early in the morning, so again I sat down while I waited. Finally, a jolly looking man approached me. “This is the men’s’ department,” he informed me with a smug smile.

“It is men’s’ slippers that I am shopping for,” I explained with a condescending smile.

“Fine, fine,” he said, “and what size?”

“Size nine, the soft, comfy type, please.”

“Size nine, soft and comfy,” he smiled, adding, “leaving out the softness and that comfy feeling, must they positively be size nine?”

“Why, yes,” rather decisively from me.

“That’s a very popular size,” he complained, as he turned and disappeared through a doorway and was lost to me for nearly fifteen minutes. Finally, he returned. “I have found, I think, exactly what you are looking for,” was his opening remark. “Look at them. Soft. Oh, so soft and comfy as a....., well, anyway, comfy.”

“But the size?” I asked.

“The size, madam, these are size eleven. I suggest you take them and stuff the toes!”

“And what about the heels?” I asked, seeming already to hear a horrible flap, flap of flying heels.

“The heels, madam?” Here he became very jolly indeed. “Why the heels always take care of themselves. In fact, slippers shouldn’t have heels, ever!”

I desperately wanted to say, “Take that silly grin off your face, for I’m not amused,” but I just thanked him and he bowed me out, while I said I would try somewhere else. I did try somewhere else until I lost count of all the shoe establishments I had entered. “This is ridiculous,” I told

myself, “Not one pair of slippers, size nine, in the whole city. I mean, the soft, comfy kind,” I added mentally.

Once outside again, I glanced up for the time on Birk’s clock which said very definitely that it was almost three. What could I have been thinking about to waste hours over one pair of slippers. I hadn’t the energy even to gaze at my list. I knew it was still intact, so I hailed a street car, which was crowded to the doors, and made for home.

“Where have you been, Mamma?” asked my little maid as I entered. “I’ve had lunch ready for such a long time”. And there it was, a dainty little meal laid for two in the kitchen nook. “But Janey, surely you’ve had your own lunch, dear?” She shook her head, and a glimpse of tears showed in her blue eyes. “I waited for you, Mamma. I wanted to.” Then, as she happily hurried around preparing me a specially nice cup of tea, she added, “Did you remember my swim suit, Mamma?”

“Darling,” I answered, and I could not look at her, “your size was missing today, and I have to get it tomorrow.”

“But you saw one I’d like?”

“Oh, yes, and a very pretty one, too.”

“What colour was it, Mamma?”

“Well,” I parried, thinking how true it is that lies usually give themselves away, Well...” Then, perhaps because I really wasn’t all to blame, a good fairy came to my assistance. She waved her wand. I found myself saying,

“Well, this is a guessing contest, for the suit I chose just perfectly matched your eyes.” This seemed satisfactory and the guessing started. Personally, I was quite proud of my work.

Late that night, after everyone was in bed, I unearthed my husband’s shabby slippers and looked them over. Certainly they were a mess, heels out, toes out, sides bulging, and to put it mildly, they were certainly soiled. To atone for my untruthfulness earlier in the day I did penance by practically making over the slippers. And when, hours later, patched and darned and cleaned, I laid them in on old shoe box. They certainly looked very different to the dilapidated affairs I had almost despairingly taken in hand earlier. I decided not to bring them out until we were away and unpacking our belongings at the cabin.

The next morning when I again hastened to the car and slid into the seat beside my husband he said, “What, still hunting slippers?”

“Oh, no, that’s finished,” I answered.

“Any luck?” was his next query.

“You just wait and see,” I smiled.

“I’ll need them. That’s sure,” was his rejoinder.

The good fairy must have waved her wand again, for the first ‘teen-age’ shop I entered dazzled my eyes with a really bewildering array of sun suits. As for sizes, they were tops; for whichever one I took a fancy to could be had in exactly the size I desired. As for matching my little maid’s

eyes it seemed best to take a varied coloured affair with blues predominating.

This time I was home for lunch. The sun suit was tried on, and pronounced ‘perfect’, after which, I procured, and showed off the remade slippers.

“Mamma, they look nicer than new ones. Won’t Daddy be pleased.”

On the Friday morning, everyone was up bright and early for this was the day we left for our cabin by the lake. “All set?” said my spouse, when the last package had been stuffed into the car. Ronnie, for once was sitting absolutely still. He had to, for there was no room to wriggle around in. My little maid decided to squeeze in beside me.

“Did you bring Daddy’s slippers?” she pantomimed. I nodded a smiling, “yes”.

Just as we were about to pull away Kitycat tore out from the open door of the house where we had taken her the night previous. She whirled herself up the back steps, then sat in full view and howled loud and dolefully. “Kitycat, dear Kitycat don’t cry,” said our little maid, herself weeping the while. “Mamma, we can’t leave her!”

And surprisingly, from Ronnie came, “Why can’t you give your cat a holiday as well as us?”

“Oh, Ronnie,” I said, “do be reasonable. Her whole life is a holiday, and we give the children next door two dollars just to make sure she takes her food and we’ve left loads of food for her.”

“Food!” he said in disgust. “What she needs is fish!”

“Will you people kindly make up your minds what you are going to do about the cat business,” said my husband in measured tones, “for I propose to have this car through the Canyon [Fraser Canyon] before sunset.”

“Well,” I said. ‘Well’ sounded terribly weak, I know, after I had said definitely this time the cat must stay home. It was evident that Ronnie sensed this weakening on my part for he slid out from among the parcels, jerked open the door of the car, and with a couple of bounds, reached Kitycat. Clutching her tightly, he raced down the path, heaved himself into the vehicle, the interior of which now looked disgustingly like the interior of a pawn shop.

“Well, shall we go,” queried my husband, “before anything else crops up to mar this peaceful leave taking?”

“Yes, let’s go!” the three of us cried in chorus. “Never mind about Kitycat,” we yelled to the neighbour who just then arrived on the scene, consternation on her features, and with the intention, I suppose, of somehow catching pussy. “We are taking her with us!” This last was while Ronnie held up Kitycat’s head out the window to prove our words.

“Good-bye house,” said Mary, “good-bye trees. Good-bye! Good-bye!”

Here, it seems, some pages of her manuscript must be lost, because the story picks up on the day of return from the holiday.

It was just three weeks later we found all ourselves getting ready for the long trek home. I say, “all”, for it almost became one less and all because of Kitycat. She had behaved beautifully all the while we were away, staying right near to the cabin except for the last few days. But the very time we wanted her she was nowhere to be seen. Everyone hunted for her, and everyone called her name with ear splitting emphasis.

“What a terrible turmoil,” I said, as I pounced on Ronnie. “All because you would bring that cat along. I hope you’ll remember next year when we start holidays that she definitely doesn’t like fish except salmon in the can. Also, don’t forget, we have driven miles and miles to find some store where we could buy at thirty-five cents a can because you and Janey thought she would starve otherwise.”

“Well, mom,” answered Ronnie, “it’s just that she found a pal the last day or so.”

“A pal! What kind of pal?”

“Well, a dog.”

“A dog!” How ridiculous. She’s terrified of dogs.”

“It’s true, mom, Janey and I have watched her playing. Some new people have taken a cabin further down the lake and it’s their dog.”

“Well, why on earth don’t you go down there and fetch her back?”

“I did go, but there was nobody around. Their car is gone...”

“And,” my voice was ominous, “Kitycat has condescended to go along with the dog?”

“I suppose so, but you would never dare to go home without her.” His voice, though he tried to put an implication in it, wasn’t very successful. “I guess Kitycat was lonely,” he volunteered, realizing immediately he had said the wrong thing.

“Yes, and you brought her along because you were positive she was going to be lonely at home. Well, we simply must go back today. You know how Daddy dislikes starting for home on the very last day which we must now do since you two pestered him to stay over.”

“He wanted to stay, mom.”

“I know all about that, but grown-ups have duties to perform which you don’t understand.”

It was then we saw my husband coming up the trail from the lake. Janey was hanging onto one of his arms while he held Kitycat in the crook of the other.

“Here’s your dog lover,” he exclaimed sternly, but I caught a twinkle in his eyes, as also did the children. The burning question, ‘where did you find her’, was on both our lips. Mary already knew. “Well, I’m glad we’re leaving here if that’s the kind of neighbours we would have to contend with. Believe it or not, they had locked her in the cabin. Imagine us doing such a thing to their mongrel.”

“Locked her in, then how did you get her?”

“Broke a window, of course. What else could I do? You don’t imagine I was going to drive three hundred and fifty miles with these kids howling the whole time for a cat.”

“Did you leave any money for the window?” was my next question.

“I did not. I left my card and briefly explained the circumstances on the back of it, and told them that wasn’t the best way to steal a cat.”

“You must have had to write very small to get all that on your card, Dad.” from Ronnie.

“Listen. You get in the car right now with the cat and stay there,” from my husband.

“But she’s had no breakfast, poor old Kitycat. She’s got to eat as well as us.”

“I seem to have heard that bleat before. You were the ones who insisted she needed fish. Well, now you know that the sight of one terrifies her.”

“Except,” I added, “out of a can.”

“Aw, come on cat,” said Ronnie disgustingly as he ambled over to the car.

“Hold on to her!” we all yelled, or she’ll run back.

It was a long drive home. We stopped a couple of times for meals and when, at last, we reached Hundred Mile House we were exactly that distance from home. Mary fell asleep in the back of the car with her arms around

Kitycat. Ronnie looked small and forlorn squeezed between them and the piles of junk abounding there.

“How about keeping me company, Ronnie,?” I said, “Just hop over the back seat.”

“Isn’t that Mary’s place, Mom?”

“Not when it’s yours,” I answered. For this I received a rather sweet smile from his upturned face. It was nearly dark and we were out of the Canyon at last. I put out an arm and drew a sleepy head to rest against me.

When, two hours later, we arrived home both children and Kitycat were still fast asleep. We stopped with a jerk. “That will wake ‘em,” said my husband. It not only had the desired effect in that direction, but the home coming seemed to have put fresh fuel into them for they tore out of the car, and crashed through the gate to the house followed by Kitycat, who let out an agonized meow. The three succeeded in generally raising the echoes!

“That’s enough,” from my husband. “You kids come and get some parcels out of the car.”

Finally, we were in the house. It seemed very grand after the cabin and, I confess, I gazed lovingly in at the comfy bedroom. It looked most inviting after our ten hour, one hundred miles of hairpin twists and turns high above the raging Fraser [river]. Every time I made the trip, I vowed I’d never go again through the Canyon..

Ronnie made one trip from the car, his arms filled with what looked like dead ferns mixed up with fishing tackle

and other junk. With this he disappeared into his room and shut the door.

Then Mary appeared with her little suit case holding, also very tenderly, a white shoe box. “Mamma,” she whispered and her eyes were dancing, “here’s daddy’s slippers. He never wore them once,” she giggled.

“He never even remembered that such a thing as slippers existed,” I volunteered, remembering the hours I spent over the repairing of them. “Take them out of the box, darling, and put them in the cupboard. They will be needed later on.”

It was a matter of minutes when my husband came in exclaiming, “Oh, my feet!” Then, as the thought struck him, “I don’t remember seeing my slippers all the time we were camping,” and he hurried to the cupboard where the slippers usually reposed when not on his feet. “Here they are,” he called out, “I don’t believe we remembered to take them after all” Then, as the thought struck him, “Didn’t you buy some new ones that morning you drove down with me?”

By this time, his shoes were off, the slippers in his hands and satisfaction was written all over his face as he slid them onto his feet. “Good old slippers,” he said, “how I missed them while we were away.” But that was too much.

“When did you miss them?” I said witheringly. “You went barefoot all day purposely, and when you came into the cabin at night you said all you wanted was a little shut

eye, and you usually got that within thirty seconds after mentioning it.

“All right, all right,” he smiled, “you win that round, but what was all the fuss about having to buy new slippers. Take a look, There’s nothing wrong with these. What was it you called them?”

“I called them ‘dilapidated affairs’,” I answered. “But perhaps a good fairy went to work on them while we were away.”

“Look at them. Not a thing wrong with them; toes in, heels in, and clean as a new pin. I don’t need new slippers, these will last me another couple of years. That proves we need holidays. Remember how shabby these looked before we went away?”

Mary called me aside as, suddenly, the humour of it all struck me. “Mamma,” and she chuckled, “Daddy must need glasses if he can’t see what you did to his slippers.”

“No, darling,” I answered, “he just needed holidays.” We both sat down on Mary’s bed and started to laugh, hugging each other as our laughter rolled out into the hall and all through the house.

Why I love my country Canada

When writing this essay, it seemed necessary at the start, to submit a definition of the work *LOVE*, as it applies to ones love of Country; and, after analyzing the several interpretations given, the words, “deep affection,” is to my mind the most satisfying.

It is many years since I left my home in Devon, England to come to Canada, and my first sight of this great country was an extensive one, lasting nearly a week as our train rolled away from the shores of the Atlantic and finally came to rest on the shores of the Pacific. A scenic ride of three thousand miles, and I loved every mile.

Perhaps, first of all, I love Canada for her almost inexpressible beauty, for no matter where one roams there is beauty on which to feast ones eyes; beauty of vast lakes and rivers, as well as the mellowed, hushed beauty of quiet meadowlands where flaming sunsets and sapphired dawns reduce one to speechless adoration. Then, beyond all this is the breathtaking, rugged, awesome beauty of the mountains reaching up to the sky and the sun.

I love Canada because, delving beneath the surface, I have discovered that within her great throbbing heart there is much kindness, as well as sincerity of purpose, together with strength to endure. She is not a proud country, yet she has much dignity and the will to stand on her own two feet. Her men have been men of iron, with the strength of Vikings to bring her where she stands today. Her mountains

proclaim the very qualities her sons exhibit; endurance, stability, and love of peace.

Has she, then, no faults, this vast and flowering land? Ah, yes, many faults, and some are grievous! Yet, when one loves, one finds the will to forgive, while the faults themselves become as stepping stones to a nobler aim, and greater achievements.

The long years have passed, and the pioneers have passed with them, as well as the years of stress and of wars, till now, behold, Canada has become a great nation; a nation to be proud of and to love. Listen to her solemn and magnificent National hymn, O Canada. It is the music of a people whose love for country must triumph over every barrier. As the last stanza to this lovely anthem starts its onward way, listen, as the music rises in an ecstasy of joyous song, the high notes slowly drifting back to lose themselves within the bosoms of her sons. “O, Canada, we stand on guard for thee.”

Yes, Canada is my country, and with deep affection do I love her.

Aftermath

The drone of pipes, the swirl of kilts, the tramp, tramp of marching feet was what awoke the echoes one sunny September morn' in 1916 when Donald, a laddie of seventeen, marched with fourteen other pipers along the causeway of Victoria, the beautiful, and onto the boat which was to bear him the first step of his journey to war sodden France. Just before stepping onto the gangplank the pipers played one last tune; pregnant with meaning were the words "Will ye no come back again?" Then they were aboard and the boat and the sea swallowed them. Left behind on the causeway was Donald's sailor brother and his only sister who wept on the sailor's arm. The eldest brother, big Malcolm, was absent.

The days passed with scant news, then the days passed without any news. The weeks stretched into months, the months lengthened into years but not anything more was heard from Donald. Frantic inquiries brought one brief word in reply from the War Office, "MISSING", the rest, all wrapped in mystery. The eldest brother grew weary with waiting, as did the sister and the sailor brother. "We will know him," they said among themselves, "by the scar of the bird on his brow for it will never fade."

Twenty long years passed. Pipers were still playing "Will ye no come back again?", and the world was startled by a king renouncing his throne; for love invaded the palace, and one who had been the darling of his people decided to lose a crown to win a smile. A week of peculiar

unrest descended upon a great Empire, and at last a moment arrived when a whole world listened to the loved voice of a prince charming as he haltingly told why he had given up a throne and a crown.

So a king left home and a palace for sake of love. At the same time a wanderer came out of the mist; a man youthful of face though grey of hair. Slowly he came 'till finally he walked the main street of the largest city in the Canadian West. There, a big man touched his arm, "Donald," said he, "at last I've found you!"

The wanderer gazed at the owner of the voice. "Sorry," he answered, "but you've got the wrong man."

The eyes of love, though, had already seen the scar where the bird was flying. "My boy," smiled the first, "I am your brother."

There was a long pause before the other answered, "Man, oh man, I do not know you."

"Come home with me and we'll thrash this out," so spoke the elder.

"No, I cannot," from the younger.

"Boy, will ye no come back again?" softly quoted big Malcom.

"Aye, I'll come. When ye speak that way I feel perhaps ye do know me."

To home they went. The sister heard his voice before she saw him. "'Tis Donald!" was all she said.

Far into the night the trio sat; two who knew and one, perplexed and worried, who did not. “Tell us all you remember,” they suggested at last. So Donald retraced his steps year by year, 1930, 1926, 1920, 1918... then his eyes took on a troubled look.

“I hear a noise,” he whispered, “a terrible noise. It’s very dark.”

“And before that,” they prompted, “Donald, what came before that?”

“It’s all dark,” cried Donald. “Before that, oh! There’s something terrible before that--it is--but I cannot remember!”

“It’s good you canna’ remember, laddie,” quietly remarked big Malcom. “But when you do remember you’ll also remember me. You’ve lost your memory, boy, but you do not know it. Stay with us here, for this is your home.”

So that selfsame day, in the evening, a great king left a home and a throne and went out into the night to find love, while a grey headed wanderer came out of the mist and the night, right into the arms of love and of home.

Within My Heart

Within my heart there dwells a love
 So pure, so true,
 And everything that I may have,
 Whateer I say or do
Springs from a lovely hidden source
 Wherein it sweetly grew,
 That mother heart of you.

Gray Dawn

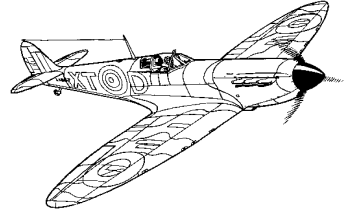
Gray Dawn. Gray dawn.
How fair is this gray dawn?
For night is 'waking from her sleep,
While setting stars still dimly peek,
And feathered songsters faintly cheep,
To greet this fair gray dawn.

Gray dawn, gray dawn!
It is not long gray dawn,
For golden breaks the morning sky
With rosy cloudlets drifting by
While skylarks circle very high,
To greet this fair, fair dawn.

The Son

“Kiss me,” she said, to her small son
Who stood with laughing eyes and prattling tongue
Beside the door where on the knob
His school bag hung.
She cupped within her hands, his face;
She kissed his brow, his cheeks, his rosy mouth,
Then he was gone.

“Kiss me,” she said, an anguished cry,
So then, with trembling lips they kissed good-byes.
Across his breast, strapped tightly on,
A knapsack hung,
Upon the floor his helmet flung.
Each kissed a brow, a cheek, a melting eye,
Then he was gone.



The Flight of Youth

Fly on, O glorious youth, fly low, fly high,
With hearts of steel, invincible, you ride the sky.
Fly on, nor fold your matchless wings
Till peace be nigh.

Fly through the flaming fire, and bursting shell,
Your nerves of iron, undaunted youth, will serve you well
To bring you back victorious from
Your fiery hell.

Beneath the starlit sky some hearts must weep;
Yet still, with outstretched wings, your watch you keep.
Courageous ones, you fail us not;
Nor ever sleep.

Fly to the dawn whose beam will guide your way
Into a path where rising sun dispartch the gray;
There shall the radiance greet you of
Your peace won that day.

Mabel Elizabeth Mackie – Poetry and Essays

When Love is Done

When love is done, dear one,
There'll be no other day.
No bird again will wing its flight
 across a trackless way.
No bud will ever bloom
For there will be no sun
 When love is done.

When love is done, my sweet,
 Night must eternal be.
No ship could ever ride again
 On opalescent sea.
No silver moon could rise
 Nor starlight ever come
 When love is done.

When love is done, my heart,
Your life, with mine, is dead.
For never more could bloom
Love's rose of glowing red.
No breathless, sweet caress
Nor thrilling kiss can come
 When love is done.

Requiem

Step softly in this hallowed room,
Bend gently o'er this bed;
One lying here is resting now,
For she is dead.

Bring lilies from your garden fair
And lay them on her breast;
A wealth of violets nestling near
Because she loved them best.

Clasp hands, bend low, gaze deep and long
This moment soon must pass;
For anguish such as I feel now
Can never last.

Press lips upon that quiet brow
One long, sad moment, so;
Then slowly, to an empty world
Lonely, I go.

Walk Slowly

Now you have gone before me, dear, walk slowly
Down the path of death so worn and wide,
For I would want to overtake you quickly
And see the journey's ending by your side.

I would be so forlorn not to see you
Down some shining highway, when I came.
Walk slowly, dear, and often look behind you,
And pause to hear me when I call your name.

I Heard Your Voice

I heard your voice and all the birds were singing.
I saw you smile, and skies became more blue.
O rapturous love, with joy and sorrow bringing,
On that glad day when joy came in with you

Sabbath Morn

‘Twas Sabbath morn when I walked in the dawn, one sunlit
day;
And blue of sapphire softness like a canopy was spread
above my head,
While dew wet was the glistening grass which round me lay
And peaceful was the path I wandered in, which led to a far
forest dim.

Long miles I walked, till last my footsteps took me where
tall spirelike trees
Swayed in a whispered sea of sound, while on the ground
And underneath my feet were leaves.
‘Twas Sabbath morn, and silence reigned without, within
When entered I that forest dim.

Then, suddenly, an unseen choir began to sing,
And never had I heard anything so beautiful
As softly it poured itself into the quiet blue
And as I gazed to where the sun came stealing through
The choir took up another theme of joy, and sang anew.

Then last, a sweet amen I heard the choir begin,
For silver throats flung to the morn a closing hymn.
Softly, with sound like muted reeds, higher and higher
The joyous theme arose.
While one clear fluted note caught in the breeze
Its echoing beauty drifting back
Till lulled to rest in the green of trees.

Amen it was, yet still it seemed to be a melody, rising and
falling
In an ecstasy of joyous song, till all was done,
And silence reigned again supreme with the forest dim, and
Peaceful was that leaf strewn path where I had entered in.

Silent I stood, while all that day,
The beauty of that last high note close with me stayed.
'Twas Sabbath morn. In peace I bowed my head,
Then sank onto my knees, deep in the leaves,
And with my hands clasped closely to my breast, I prayed.

Dream House

O dream house by the sea, the morn has come
For glistening sunbeams wake each sleeping bud,
And all the birds begin to sing so joyously
A carol fair to greet the rising sun.
So, come, let's walk the dew wet grass
With lightsome feet;
Then find a place where we can watch
The lazy, capping wavelets on the beach.

O quiet house by the sea
High noon has passed
For shadows on the sundial mark the hours.
Below, the soft waves lap the shore caressingly
And still it is, and drowsy all the hours
Since morn began,
So come, let's choose a spot, then watch
To gaze through sunlit, silvered leaves
The glistening sailboats drifting idly in the breeze.

O house of golden memories, the night is nigh,
For all the throated warblers are asleep
And every bud and every flower is nodding drowsily
While night winds fade and die.
So come, let's walk the quiet shore
With arms entwined, then wander slowly home
Beneath the moon-drenched, slumberous pines.

Qualicum

We went to stay at Qualicum,
Qualicum with its bay,
And found such haunting loveliness
We could not go away.
For pine trees kissed a jeweled shore
Where stretched a golden sand,
While darkness brought a thousand stars,
Making it fairyland.

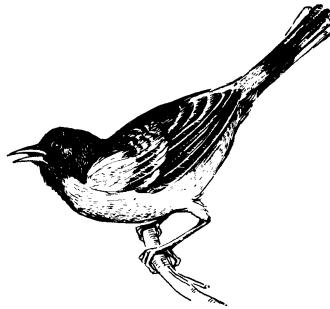
We stayed so long at Qualicum,
For oh! the air was sweet,
That when we left, the summer leaves
Fell dying at our feet.
And frosted sunbeams touched the waves
Which gently lapped the shore,
While all was still, and gold, and hushed,
For summer was no more.

We said good-bye to Qualicum,
Qualicum with its bay,
And now we're many miles afar,
And months on months away,
Dreaming, we watch a rippling tide
Embrace a rapturous shore,
Where dancing waves are calling us
To Qualicum once more.

Squeaky Gate

Just listen to that bird, one day my father said
When we were walking in the garden
Midst the tulips red.
I stopped to listen, then I heard
The squeaky piping of a bird.
How quaint he sings, again my father spake,
It sounds just like the opening of a squeaky gate.
I raised my head when I could see
Upon a branch of leafy tree
A tiny solitary bird.
He seemed to know that the spring was late
So poured his heart out for a mate
Not knowing that we heard.

This happened one lush
in May
When apple blossoms
bloomed;
When feathered things
tried out their wings
And piped a little tune.
For weeks our songster
sang at morn,
As well as when 'twas late,
Till last my father called him, as did I
The squeaky gate.



day

Year after year from this time on
To the same spot he came, he seemed that one,
To sing his little squeaky song,
So that we knew when spring was here,
For he would suddenly appear and start to sing.

And then on one sweet summer day,
Where on a branch
He piped so gay his little song,
Our Persian cat espied him there.
She crept beneath, then, with one bound
She thrust him from his perch to the ground
Where with her paw she held him there.

I hastened to that saddened scene of pain
And wet with tears my face became,
For when I gently picked him up,
So still he lay.
I knew that little squeaky gate
Would never sing again.

I laid him in a grave, so small, so new,
Beneath a bush of roses, white of hue,
With morning glories covered him,
These set with dew.
I never knew if there were more than one,
I only say, that all that summer through
When he had gone, we did not hear
One pipe from any other bird
Like our sweet feathered one.

Farewell to Churchill

Farewell, good and faithful servant,
Take your sleep and rest,
Though we sorrow at your passing,
This is best.

Enter loyal, courageous leader
To a world more fair.
Many loved ones bid you welcome
Over there.

So, farewell, beloved hero,
Your work now is done.
See, the Father smiles, and beckons,
Come!

God Grant us Joy

God grant us joy - a joy that has no sorrow,
A joy whose birth can bring no after pain;
Grant that we live within its glowing beauty
For joy is love, so love is joy again.

God grant us beauty - may we lose it never;
Beauty of face, and form, and spirit deep within.
Grant that it throws its halo all around us,
Where from its crystal depths, may life begin.

God grant us love - the love that passeth knowledge
For love must dwell in every noble breast.
No fear has love, nor anything to harm us,
Just sweet contentment, therefore love means rest.

God grant us peace, that flows on like a river,
Baring its bosom to the sun's bright healing rays,
Its depths so cooling to the fevered spirit,
Its restfulness, like evening after day.

God grant us rest - a resting from our labours
When our brief day beneath the sun is done;
Grant beauty, joy, peace, love and rest forever,
For out of night, love's perfect day will come.

Journey's End

Near to the night birds call,
And the woods low rim,
Near to your heart of love and your tender smile,
Beneath your roof, near the glow of your fire I'll sit,
For I am coming.
Yes, just coming in.

Far in the deepening sky
A star shines through,
Guiding my steps to the path that we used to know.
All through the years you have called.
I have been answering, too.
Now I am coming,
Just coming home to you.

Near to the end, ah yes,
Near to the end of the way,
Near to your sheltering arms and your kiss of peace
You have been waiting, I know,
Waiting since break of day.
Now I am coming,
Just coming home for aye.

