Poems of love and earth

Drinkwater John
Title: Poems of love and earth

Author: Drinkwater John

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POEMS
OF LOVE AND EARTH

BY
JOHN DRINKWATER
AUTHOR OF 'LYRICAL AND OTHER POEMS' 'POEMS OF MEN AND HOURS'
'COPHETUA' ETC.

SECOND IMPRESSION

DAVID NUTT
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DEDICATION

TO MY WIFE

My words are here of immemorial things,
The labouring earth, the swift unwearied wings
Of Love that ever circle earth about,
Pity for stricken men and pride that they
Yet look with eyes heroic on the day,
Creators in the void and lords of doubt;

Of women who, albeit nursing yet
Remembrance of the things we would forget,
Spoiled of so much, so little paid in fee,
Keep bright in wonder and in worship still
The hearts of men so troubled to fulfil,
Not wholly shamed, the end that is to be.

Of secret exultations of the year,
Fierce inarticulate passions that are near
In ecstasy to God's imagining,
Of men who wake each day as to a proud
Adventure, and go down to sleep unbowed,
To dream alone of what the dawn may bring.
My words of these. And of my age what word?
Are not of these the ultimate longings heard
Upon the lips of every storied age?
What little vision may be mine of these
Is clear or clouded as my day decrees,
The time’s my tutor, and my song the wage.

And you, my Lady, to whose lap I bring
This little treasure of my voyaging,
Of you I take how much, of how great worth—
Of your hands healing, peace of your good care,
Of your hope strength all perilous things to dare,
And fellowship in you with Love and Earth.
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VIGIL

I watch the good ships on the sea
Yet never ship comes home to me.

Out of the crowded ports they sail
To crowded ports that cry them hail.

And still they bring no word to me,
Tall masted ships upon the sea.

As goodly messengers they go
Laughing against all winds that blow.

Yet never ship upon the sea
Bears blessed merchandise for me.

I watch them pass from friend to friend
All day from world’s end to world’s end.

No pleasant ship comes down to me
Along the long leagues of the sea.

Nor sign nor salutation made,
Beyond the far sea-line they fade.

Yet as I watch them on the sea
All ships are piloted by me.
WED

I married him on Christmas morn,—
Ah woe betide, ah woe betide,
Folk said I was a comely bride,—
Ah me forlorn.

All braided was my golden hair,
And heavy then, and shining then,
My limbs were sweet to madden men,—
O cunning snare.

My beauty was a thing they say
Of large renown,—O dread renown,—
Its rumour travelled through the town,
Alas the day.

His kisses burn my mouth and brows,—
O burning kiss, O barren kiss,—
My body for his worship is,
And so he vows.

But daily many men draw near
With courtly speech and subtle speech;
I gather from the lips of each
A deadly fear.