

# Poems of Sarah Orne Jewett

Compiled and edited by

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For Linda, Sarah, & Gabe

with love

and gratitude

## Introduction

While Sarah Orne Jewett is not remembered so much for her poetry as for her fiction, she published poems for adults and children in major and minor venues throughout her professional career. Since her death, two collections have been published: *Verses*, 1916, and *The Complete Poems of Sarah Orne Jewett*, 1999.

Clara and Carl Weber, in *A Bibliography of the Published Writings of Sarah Orne Jewett* (1949), explain that *Verses*, was "prepared by Mark A. DeWolfe Howe and printed by D. B. Updike, the Merrymount Press, Boston (24). Howe is the author of *Memories of a Hostess* (1922), which records episodes in the associations of the group of artist friends of Jewett and Annie Fields." The title page of that edition notes that the book was "printed for her friends." The volume was dedicated to T. J. E., Dr. Theodore Jewett Eastman (1879-1931), Jewett's beloved nephew, the son of Caroline Jewett and Edwin C. Eastman.

### Contents of *Verses* (1916)

To My Father: I	Star Island
To My Father: II	The Widows' House
Assurance	Dunluce Castle
The Gloucester Mother	Discontent
Flowers in the Dark	A Four-Leaved Clover
Boat Song	A Child's Grave
Top of the Hill	The Spendthrift Doll
At Home From Church	The Little Doll That Lied
Together	The Fallen Oak
A Caged Bird	

In 1949, Burton Trafton, Jr., published a centennial edition of *Verses* (Cleveland: American Weave Press). In his preface, he wrote:

The following poems first appeared as a group in 1916, seven years after Miss Jewett's death, and were for distribution among her friends. Those to her father reflect, in a degree, the tremendous emotional upheaval occasioned by the death of one upon whom she was so emotionally dependent. It was he who she felt first gave her the insight which enabled her to write realistic, sensitive, and wholly quiet descriptions of Maine people and the Maine landscape. Others reflect her attachment to her native town; to the coast at Wells and York and the Isles of Shoals where her friend Celia Thaxter made her home. They are homely poems, often lacking the precision of her prose. One might question, indeed, whether she ever intended they be brought together under one cover. But there is beauty here, and with the re-awakening of an interest in her works on the part of both layman and scholar, it seems entirely appropriate that such an edition be made available to an appreciative audience this centennial year.

He made several changes to the 1916 edition, mostly alterations in typography and design. More significantly, he moved the final poem, "The Fallen Oak," to the beginning, where it appears before the contents, and this title is not included in the contents list. Also, he combined the first two poems under one title, "To My Father," but retained the numerical distinction I and II.

The second collection to appear was *The Complete Poems of Sarah Orne Jewett*, Forest Hills, NY: Ironweed Press, 1999. It was not really "complete." Thanks mainly to the internet, a number of her poems have since come to light.

This new collection gathers in chronological order of their publication all of the currently known poems Jewett published. Obviously missing are most of the unpublished manuscript poems held by Harvard University's Houghton Library and in a few other collections. While developing the on-line archive, *The Sarah Orne Jewett Text Project*, I have collected a few of these, and I include them here. A number of the manuscript poems can be read in Josephine Donovan's article, "The Unpublished Love Poems of Sarah Orne Jewett," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 4,3 (1979) 26-31.

## Contents and Bibliography

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- 6 "The Baby-House Famine": *Our Young Folks*, September 1868.
- 7 "In a Hurry": *Riverside Magazine*, June 1870.
- 8 "The Spendthrift Doll": *Merry's Museum*, February 1871, Verses 1916.
- 9 "Daybreak": *The Independent*, August 1, 1872.
- 10 "The Old Doll": *The Independent*, July 24, 1873.
- 11 "The Sparrow's Mourners": *The Independent*, May 21, 1874.
- 12 "The Little Doll that Lied": *St. Nicholas*, August 1874, Verses 1916.
- 13 "Together": *Atlantic Monthly*, May 1875, Verses 1916.
- 14 "A Lament": in a letter to Mellen Chamberlain, Summer 1875.
- 15 "Discontent": *St. Nicholas*, February 1876, Verses 1916.
- 17 "Adeline's Pepper-owl Poem": In "The Pepper-Owl," *St. Nicholas*, June 1876
- 18 "A Lost Doll": *The Independent*, September 28, 1876.
- 19 "Verses": *Sunday Afternoon*, June 1878. The second was collected in Verses 1916, titled "Assurance."
- 20 "Only a Doll!": *St. Nicholas*, June 1878.
- 21 "At Home from Church": *Sunday Afternoon*, June 1879, Verses 1916.
- 22 "Boat Song": Set to music in 1879, Verses 1916
- 24 "Flowers in the Dark": *Atlantic Monthly*, March 1880, Verses 1916.
- 25 "Verses for a Letter": *Atlantic Monthly*, April 1880.
- 26 "A Night in June": *The Christian Union*, July 7, 1880.
- 27 "Two Mornings": *Harper's Magazine*, December 1880.
- 28 "In a Christmas Letter": *The American*, December 25, 1880.
- 29 "A Day's Secret": *The Christian Union*, January 26, 1881.
- 30 "Two Musicians": *The American*, February 5, 1881.
- 31 "Sheltered": *Harper's Magazine*, August 1881.
- 34 "On Star Island": *Harper's Magazine*, September 1881, Verses 1916.
- 36 "The Soul of the Sunflower": *Scribner's Monthly*, October 1881.
- 37 "At Waking": *The Sword and the Pen*, December 14, 1881.
- 38 "A Country Boy in Winter": *Harper's Young People*, January 24, 1882.
- 39 "Missing": *Harper's Magazine*, March 1882.

- 40 "Waiting": *Our Continent*, April 26, 1882.
- 42 "The Eagle Trees": *Harper's Magazine*, March 1883.
- 45 "Perseverance": *St. Nicholas*, September 1883. Collected in *Verses* 1916, with a new title, "A Four-leaved Clover," and a new final stanza.
- 46 "Dunluce Castle": *Harper's Magazine*, November 1883, *Verses* 1916.
- 47 "A Farmer's Sorrow": *The Manhattan Magazine*, March 1884.
- 49 "York Garrison, 1640": *Wide Awake*, June 1886.
- 51 "Sonnet on Meeting Ralph Waldo Emerson": in an undated letter to Annie Fields c. 1886-1890, and in Jewett's unpublished story, "Carlyle in America" c. 1894-1890.
- 51 "A Caged Bird": *Atlantic Monthly*, June 1887, *Verses* 1916.
- 55 " On New Year's Eve in the Morning": *The Modern Priscilla*, January 1888.
- 56 "A Child's Grave": *The Poets of Maine*, *Verses* 1916.
- 58 "Waiting at Fourscore": *The American Advocate of Peace and Arbitration*, May 1891.
- 59 "O little pains! Mes petite breads!": in a letter to Mrs. George D. Howe in Fields, *Letters of Sarah Orne Jewett*, dated at Chailly, 9 July, 1892.
- 60 "A Wild Rose": *Chicago Times-Herald*, September 7, 1895.
- 61 "The Gloucester Mother": *McClure's Magazine*, October 1908, *Verses* 1916.
- 63 "To My Father I and II": *Verses* 1916
- 64 "Top of the Hill": *Verses* 1916
- 65 "The Widows' House": *Verses* 1916
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### Unpublished Manuscripts

- 68 "The Daisies": 15 January 1871.
- 69 "All in the winter weather."
- 70 "Isles to east and isles to west are": 13 September 1884.
- 71 "Shall I ever tire of your kisses?"
- 72 "To a Mandolin."
- 73 "Why do I love you?"

### An Authorship Puzzle

- 74 "Friendship": *The Cornucopia*, June 1871. Written by Jewett?

## THE BABY-HOUSE FAMINE.

At the baby-house door sits my sweet little Kitty,  
In her apron lies Kitty, her namesake, asleep;  
The dollies look out of the baby-house parlors,  
And the baby-clothes lie on the floor in a heap.

Are the cares of your housekeeping quite overwhelming?  
Are the children unruly, and servants a bore?  
But they sit dressed for callers; and down in the kitchen  
Sits placid old Dinah with eyes on the floor.

If you're tired of playing, run out to the garden;  
There's green grass to play on, the sunshine is bright;  
Or Auntie will read you a nice little story, --  
Take her lap for your bed, dear, and play it is night.

Then the dear little face grew exceedingly solemn,  
And in the brown eyes were two wee little tears;  
The dollies -- believe me -- looked anxious and troubled;  
Miss Kitten gaped sadly; O. what were your fears?

Dear Auntie, my children are dying of hunger;  
Just look at Miss Anna! she's grown very thin;  
I've not had a party for such a forever, --  
And to see them all starving! It's really a sin.

Well, the last that I saw of the dolls in affliction,  
They sat round their table, mamma at the head;  
She seemed very hungry, but they sat there smiling,  
And when Kitty finished they all went to bed.

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### Note

"The Baby-House Famine" was published under the pseudonym of Alice Eliot in *Our Young Folks* (4:568) in September 1868. This is the first Jewett poem listed by Weber and Weber in *A Bibliography of the Published Writings of Sarah Orne Jewett*, and so is her first poem known to have appeared in a major magazine.

## IN A HURRY.

O. silly little Calla!\* why,  
You had enough to do;  
Who ever thought of blossoms yet  
From such a child as you?  
Grow tall and strong all winter long --  
That's what you should have done;  
How came you to forget your leaves,  
Besides that little one?  
I think so small a bud as hers  
Never before was seen;  
I thought it was her second leaf,  
That little twist of green.  
And yesterday I moved her out,  
To give her sun and room,  
And found she'd made the best of things,  
And really meant to bloom.

The busy thing! The leaf she has  
Can hardly stand alone;  
But I suppose she could not rest  
Until her best was shown.  
I wonder if some other plants  
Will tell their secrets too, --  
Your grown up sister 's so discreet,  
And not at all like you.

The cross old cactus gorgeous is, --  
That cloud is silver lined. --  
And over all his thorny stalks  
The smilax\* threads have twined.  
The slender tall abutilon\*

Is gay with golden bells;  
The perfume from the violets  
Of hidden blooming tells;  
Geraniums, the friends of years,  
Good-tempered, green old pair;  
The lemon and the orange-tree  
Have long been standing there.  
Among the leaves of salvia  
The blossoms flame and fall;  
But little Lily is the dear  
And darling of them all.

---

### Notes

"In a Hurry" was published in *Riverside Magazine* (4:251) in June 1870.

*Calla*: a variety of lily.

*smilax*: probably in this case a soft bright green twining plant, but the name usually applies to green briars.

*abutilon*: plants that are members of the mallow family, usually with lobed leaves and showy, bell-shaped flowers.

*salvia*: a flowering shrub of the mint family.

## THE SPENDTHRIFT DOLL

As I was coming down the street,  
I saw the saddest sight;  
Sitting before a candy-shop,  
A doll all dressed in white.  
A Paris hat was on her head,  
Her eyes were china blue,  
And, looking down below her gown,  
I saw her pink kid shoe.

Her veil thrown back showed me that her  
Expression was refined;  
Her carriage-top was folded down,  
Her sash was tied behind.  
Beside her sat a shaggy dog,  
And, as I came too near,  
His growls, though not so very loud,  
Were terrible to hear!

Just then the shop-door opened wide  
And out two children came;  
The last one several bundles bore,  
The first one just the same.  
And some they put behind the doll,  
And some before her lay;  
And taking now the horse's place  
They turned to go away.

We, who are good, can't understand  
Such very wicked ways;  
There must have been at least a pound  
Of candy in the chaise!  
The money she so idly spends  
She might so wisely use--  
Buy some poor doll a Sunday hat,  
Or week-day pair of shoes;

To outgrown and old-fashioned dolls  
She might be such a friend;  
To heathen dolls in savage lands  
Improving books might send.  
'T is sad to think that one so small  
Can be so great in sin.  
I fear my tears will form a lake  
And I shall fall therein!

### Note

"The Spendthrift Doll" first appeared in  
*Merry's Museum* (59:88-89) February 1871.  
The text of the first appearance differs from

the text above. Below is the  
*Merry's Museum* text, which was published  
under the name of Sarah O. Sweet.

## THE SPENDTHRIFT DOLL

As I was coming down the street,  
I saw the saddest sight;  
Sitting before a candy store,  
A doll all dressed in white!  
A Paris hat was on her head;  
Her eyes were china blue;  
And, looking down below her gown  
I saw her pink kid shoe.

Her veil, thrown back, showed me that her  
Expression was refined;  
Her carriage-top was folded down;  
Her sash was tied behind:  
Beside her sat a shaggy dog;  
And, as I went too near,  
His growl, though not so very loud,  
Was terrible to hear.

Just then the shop door opened wide,  
And out two children came:  
The last one several bundles bore,  
The first one just the same;  
And some they put behind the doll,  
And some before her lay,  
And taking now the horse's place,  
They turn to go away.

We who are good can't understand  
Such very wicked ways;  
There must have been at least a pound  
Of candy in the chaise!  
The money she so idly spends  
She might so wisely use!  
Buy some poor doll a Sunday hat,  
Or week-day pair of shoes.

To outgrown and old-fashioned dolls  
She might be such a friend!  
To heathen dolls in savage lands  
Improving books might lend.  
'T is sad to think how one so small  
Can be so great in sin:  
I fear my tears will form a lake  
And I shall fall therein!



## DAYBREAK.

Where out beyond the eastern hills  
Was faintest light, there, scorning  
Shadows which warned us back, we turned  
Our faces toward the morning.

And soon by daylight we could see  
The road we thought so weary;  
Where we were frightened in the night  
Was anything but dreary.

On either side grew grass and flowers,  
We saw each other's faces;  
The light shone deep into our hearts,  
The rocks were resting places.

When first upon that morning cold  
We saw the golden glory,  
And found the light was meant for us,  
And learned anew its story,

We were so glad. With hearts at rest,  
In peace the sunshine found us.  
We sang a psalm, and smiling watched  
The pleasant land around us.

For, though the clouds grow dark o'erhead,  
And storms may bring us sorrow,  
It's not for always, and the sun  
Still shines--will shine to-morrow.

We lose the path, our feet soon tire;  
We seek new ways, lamenting;  
And back like truant children come,  
Unsatisfied, repenting.

Though we may fall and fall again,  
We fear to walk no longer;  
And even through mistakes and pain  
Can hourly grow the stronger.

Dear Lord of Light! forever lead  
Our wandering hearts. Oh! guide us;  
Nor let us once in storm or sun  
Forget the Friend beside us.

### Notes

"Daybreak" was published in *The Independent* 24:4 (August 1, 1872). In this Christian religious weekly newspaper, the "Friend" of whom readers are reminded in the last line would be Jesus.

## THE OLD DOLL.

Why, my poor, forsaken dolly! Where is your little mistress?  
Do I not hear her singing somewhere about the house?  
But your gown is so old-fashioned, your curls are very dusty,  
And your nose - can it be possible! - what, eaten by a mouse?

It was so little while ago that, dressed in finest fashion,  
You had your chair in the parlor; you drove out every day;  
You counted friends by the dozens; you gave such charming parties;  
I wonder why you sit alone in the garret, thrown away.

How very sad it must have been to find the world you lived in  
Change and grow older every day, while you were just the same.  
I think I know the story. Did they talk more with each other  
And go to walk without "the dolls"? Ah! you were not to blame.

Tell me, you poor, old dolly, if she never once seemed sorry  
That things had changed so utterly, as the days rushed on so fast?  
Perhaps she wished the playhouse friends were still her best and dearest,  
And every one as good and true as you in days long past.

What happy times those must have been, for Kitty loved you dearly;  
What solemn secrets you must know, if you could only tell;  
How she would smile to hear them now, that tall, reserved young lady,  
Who told you everything she knew and cared for you so well.

Ah! It's really very hard, and I pity you, poor old Rosa -  
Once the best of all her treasures, and now sitting here alone;  
But the children grow up, dolly, and the days and nights do hurry,  
Till they leave behind old pleasures and are men and women grown.

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### Note

"The Old Doll" appeared in *The Independent* (25:93) July 24, 1872.

## THE SPARROW'S MOURNERS.

The grass was growing fresh and green  
In all the sheltered places;  
The winter storms and cold seemed done,  
The children frolicked in the sun,  
With shouts and happy faces.

Next morning made that day a dream;  
For fast the snow was flying.  
["]The grass will freeze," the children said.  
"The little birds, we are afraid,  
With cold must all be dying."

But soon the sun came out again;  
Next day, before the gloaming,  
The grass looked greener than before,  
And close besides the garden-door  
A daffodil was blooming.

But, walking by the garden wall,  
I saw a little sparrow,  
Who, frightened by the snow and wind,  
Had frozen where he tried to find  
Warmth in a crevice narrow.

Poor little stranger! Tired and cold,  
With clothes he wore in summer,  
How hard to change a southern nest  
For wintry winds; no place to rest  
Or welcome a new-comer!

Some little birds sang overhead,  
So gay and merry-hearted.  
They flew up northward side by side,  
But did not seek the bird who died  
Or mourn their friend departed.

But, though his cronies did not grieve,  
The children felt much sorrow;  
Walked in procession one by one;  
They made his grave, and raised a stone  
Above it, on the morrow.

### Note

"The Sparrow's Mourners" appeared in *The Independent* 26:15 (May 21, 1874). The quotation mark in brackets has been added.

## THE LITTLE DOLL THAT LIED.

"Why, Polly! What's the matter, dear?  
You look so very sad:  
Has your new doll been taken ill?  
It cannot be so bad!"  
Nine of the dolls sit in a row,  
But there is one beside--  
See in the corner, upside-down,  
The little doll that lied!

Out in the corner, all alone,  
The wicked doll must stay!  
None of the rest must speak to her,  
Or look there while they play.  
All her best clothes, except her boots,  
Are safely put aside  
(Her boots are painted on her feet)--  
The little doll that lied!

Oh, lying's such a naughty thing!  
Why, she might swear and steal.  
Or murder someone, I dare say;  
Just think how we should feel  
To have her in a prison live,  
Or, worse than that, be hung!  
What won't she do when she is old,  
If she did this so young?

And now the silver mug and spoon  
Come into use again,  
And down the faces of the dolls  
The tears run fast as rain.  
Three have tipped over in their grief,  
Their tears cannot be dried;  
Their handkerchiefs are dripping wet--  
The little doll has lied!

### Note

"The Little Doll that Lied" first appeared in *St. Nicholas* (1:595) August 1874, where the text is slightly different. Below is the *St. Nicholas* text.

### *St. Nicholas* text

"Why, Polly! What's the matter, dear?  
You look so very sad:  
Has your new doll been taken ill?  
It cannot be so bad."  
Nine of the dolls sit in a row,  
But there is one beside,  
See in the corner, upside down,  
The little doll that lied!

Out in the corner, all alone,  
The wicked doll must stay;  
None of the rest must speak to her,  
Or look there while they play.  
All her best clothes, except her boots,  
Are safely put aside;  
Her boots are painted on her feet,--  
The little doll that lied!

Oh, lying's such a naughty thing!  
Why, she might swear and steal,  
Or murder some one, I dare say;  
Just think how we should feel  
To have her in a prison live,  
Or, worse than that, be hung!  
What won't she do when she is old,  
If she did this so young?

And now the silver mug and spoon  
Come into use again,  
And down the faces of the dolls  
The tears run fast as rain.  
Three have tipped over with their grief,  
Their tears cannot be dried;  
Their handkerchiefs are dripping wet,--  
The little doll has lied!

## TOGETHER.

I wonder if you really send  
These dreams of you that come and go!  
I like to say, "She thought of me,  
And I have known it." Is it so?

Though other friends are by your side,  
Yet sometimes it must surely be  
They wonder where your thoughts have  
gone -  
Because I have you here with me.

And when the busy day is done,  
When work is ended, voices cease,  
And everyone has said good-night  
In fading twilight, then, in peace,

Idly I rest; you come to me,  
Your dear love holds me close to you.  
If I could see you face to face,  
It would not be more sweet and true.

And now across the weary miles  
Light from my star shines. Is it, dear,  
You never really went away--  
I said farewell, and--kept you here?

### Notes

"Together" first appeared in *Atlantic Monthly* (35:590) May 1875. A copy of the poem

#### From Jewett's 1874 diary.

Reprinted from MS Am 1743.1 (341) the Houghton Library, Harvard University.  
{ } indicates text inserted by Jewett.  
[] indicates a guess at intended punctuation.  
[ **bold** ] indicates deleted text.

I wonder if you really send  
These loving thoughts that come and go;  
I like to say; 'she thought of me  
And I have known it;' Is it so?

Though other friends walk by your side,  
Yet sometimes it must surely be,  
They wonder where your thoughts have  
gone;  
Because I have you here with me.

dated October 1874 appears in Jewett's diary of that year. Both texts are different from the *Verses* text; below are copies.

#### *Atlantic Monthly* Text

I wonder if you really send  
These dreams of you that come and go!  
I like to say, "She thought of me,  
And I have known it." Is it so?

Though other friends are by your side,  
Yet sometimes it must surely be,  
They wonder where your thoughts have  
gone,  
Because I have you here with me.

And when the busy day is done  
When work is ended, voices cease,  
When every one has said good night,  
In fading firelight then in peace

I idly rest; you come to me, -  
Your dear love holds me close to you.  
If I could see you face to face  
It would not be more sweet and true;

And so, across the empty miles  
Light from my star shines. Is it, dear,  
Your love has never gone away?  
I said farewell and -- kept you here.

And when the busy day is done  
When work is ended; voices cease,  
And everyone has said good night,  
When sleep is waiting and in peace.

{I idly} lie at rest: you come to me  
Your dear love holds me close to you[.]  
If I could see you face to face,  
It would not be more sweet and true.

I do not hear the words you speak  
Nor [ **grasp** ] {touch} your hands, nor see  
your eyes,  
[ **Yet** ] So, far away the flowers may grow  
From whence to me the fragrance flies.

And so across the weary miles  
Light from my star shines Is it, dear  
Your love has never gone away?  
I said farewell – and kept you here.

Oct. 1874 -----

## A LAMENT.

Tune, *Hamburg*.

The tides creep slowly in and out,  
The sea winds blow; the wild birds call;  
Oh sweet and bright the wild rose blooms –  
There is a shadow o'er them all.

Oh, what to us the rose's bloom?  
How can we care for sea-birds' song?  
Through tears we watch the restless sea  
For absent is our dear Aunt Long.

We loved to sit upon the rocks;  
To watch the waves and dashing spray,  
But sigh, for she, who oft last year  
Was spattered with us, is away.

No more we raise our voices sweet  
To that melodious darkey tune,--  
There's no Aunt Long to serenade,  
And useless is the fair new moon.

Her grave behavior; solemn looks;  
The hat she wore of ample size  
Sweet reminiscences by scores,  
Fond memory shows to mournful eyes.

Oh, "Herring" wails and "Gusty" howls,  
And Mary fadeth like a leaf.  
Persis and Sary, pale and thin  
No longer eat, for deepest grief.

The elders strive to hide their grief --  
Her namesake steals away to cry;  
The afternoons are spent in tears,  
And unavailing misery.

Her call on Thursday only served  
To make our sadness still more deep.  
It passed as quick as swallow's flight,  
Or pleasing vision seen in sleep.

The roses fade upon our cheeks,  
And hushed is mirthful shout and song.  
We mourn beside the sad sea waves,  
The absence of our dear Aunt Long.

### Notes

This poem is in a letter of the summer of 1875 to Mellen Chamberlain. This transcription by John Alden appeared in *Boston Public Library Quarterly* 9 (1957): 86-96. It is reprinted here courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

Alden writes:

"During their visit to 'The Cove' that summer the Jewett girls joined other guests in an omnibus letter to Chamberlain. Sarah's contribution was a poem referring to a relative, a Mrs. Willard, known as 'Aunt Long.' She introduces her lines:

I feel that you will deeply sympathize in the feelings I have tried to express in the enclosed Lament, and send it, thinking it will be more interesting than any other addition to this letter....

Whether or not Chamberlain's sense of humor was equal to the poem we shall never know."

*Tune: Hamburg:* The hymn tune "Hamburg," is credited to Lowell Mason (1824). Perhaps the most familiar hymn sung to this tune is "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" (1707) by Isaac Watts.

## DISCONTENT.

### Four Texts

"Discontent" first appeared in *St. Nicholas* (3:247) February 1876. It was reprinted in Jewett's *Play Days*, 1878, and again in *Verses* 1916. Each text is slightly different. Following are four texts. The fourth is from a manuscript presentation copy that belongs to T. A. Benoit, who graciously provided a photocopy.

The *St. Nicholas* text was illustrated. View that version here:

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015068522138&view=1up&seq=269&q1=discontent>

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#### DISCONTENT. (*St. Nicholas* text)

Down in a field, one day in June,  
The flowers all bloomed together,  
Save one, who tried to hide herself,  
And drooped, that pleasant weather.

A robin who had soared too high,  
And felt a little lazy,  
Was resting near a buttercup  
Who wished she were a daisy.

For daisies grow so trig and tall;  
She always had a passion  
For wearing frills about her neck  
In just the daisies' fashion.

And buttercups must always be  
The same old tiresome color,  
While daisies dress in gold and white,  
Although their gold is duller.

"Dear robin," said this sad young flower,  
"Perhaps you'd not mind trying  
To find a nice white frill for me,  
Some day, when you are flying?"

"You silly thing!" the robin said;  
"I think you must be crazy!  
I'd rather be my honest self  
Than any made-up daisy.

"You're nicer in your own bright gown,  
The little children love you;  
Be the best buttercup you can,  
And think no flower above you.

"Though swallows leave me out of sight,  
We'd better keep our places;  
Perhaps the world would all go wrong  
With one too many daisies.

"Look bravely up into the sky,  
And be content with knowing

That God wished for a buttercup  
Just here, where you are growing."

---

#### DISCONTENT (*Play Days* text)

Down in a field one day in June,  
The flowers all bloomed together  
Save one, who tried to hide herself  
And drooped, that pleasant weather.

A robin who had flown too high,  
And felt a little lazy,  
Was resting near this buttercup  
Who wished she were a daisy.

The daisies grow so trig and tall;  
She always had a passion  
For wearing frills around her neck  
In just the daisies' fashion.

And buttercups must always be  
The same old tiresome color,  
While daisies dress in gold and white,  
Although their gold is duller.

"Dear robin," said this sad young flower,  
"Perhaps you'd not mind trying  
To find a nice white frill for me  
Some day, when you are flying."

"You silly thing!" the robin said,  
"I think you must be crazy,  
I'd rather be my honest self  
Than any made-up daisy.

"You're nicer in your own bright gown  
The little children love you;  
Be the best buttercup you can,  
And think no flower above you.

"Though swallows leave me out of sight,  
We'd better keep our places.

Perhaps the world would all go wrong  
With one too many daisies.

"Look bravely up into the sky  
And be content with knowing  
That God wished for a buttercup  
Just here, where you are growing."

---

DISCONTENT (*Verses* 1916 text)

Down in a field, one day in June,  
The flowers all bloomed together,  
Save one who tried to hide herself,  
And drooped, that pleasant weather.

A robin who had flown too high  
And felt a little lazy  
Was resting near this buttercup  
Who wished she were a daisy.

The daisies grow so trig and tall,--  
She always had a passion  
For wearing frills around her neck  
In just the daisies' fashion.

And buttercups must always be  
The same old tiresome color--  
While daisies dress in gold and white,  
Although their gold is duller.

"Dear robin," said this sad young flower,  
"Perhaps you'd not mind trying  
To find a nice white frill for me  
Some day when you are flying."

"You silly thing!" the robin said,  
"I think you must be crazy.  
I'd rather be my honest self  
Than any made-up daisy.

"You're nicer in your own bright gown,--  
The little children love you.  
Be the best buttercup you can,  
And think no flower above you.

"Though swallows leave me out of sight,  
We'd better keep our places;  
Perhaps the world would all go wrong  
With one too many daisies.

"Look bravely up into the sky  
And be content with knowing  
That God wished for a buttercup  
Just here, where you are growing."

---

DISCONTENT. (Benoit text)

Down in a field one day in June,  
The flowers all bloomed together,  
Save one who tried to hide herself,  
And drooped that pleasant weather.

A robin who had flown too high,  
And felt a little lazy,  
Was resting near a buttercup  
Who wished she were a daisy.

For daisies grow so trig and tall;  
She always had a passion  
For wearing frills around her neck  
In just the daisies' fashion.

And buttercups must always be  
The same old tiresome color,  
While daisies dress in gold and white,  
Although their gold is duller.

"Dear robin," said this sad young flower,  
"Perhaps you'd not mind trying  
To find a nice white frill for me,  
Some day when you are flying?"

"You silly thing!" the robin said;  
"I think you must be crazy!  
I'd rather be my honest self  
Than any made-up daisy.

"You're nicer in your own bright gown  
The little children love you;  
Be the best buttercup you can,  
And think no flower above you.

"Though swallows leave me out of sight,  
We'd better keep our places;  
Perhaps the world would all go wrong  
With one too many daisies.

"Look bravely up into the sky,  
And be content with knowing  
That God wished for a buttercup  
Just here where you are growing."



### ADELINE'S PEPPER-OWL POEM.

"Tell me about the kittens, love!  
I long to hear you speak.  
Oh, tell me everything you know!  
Unclose that silver beak.

"Oh, do not look so sad, my dear!  
And cease that dismal scowl:  
Smile gently with your yellow eyes,  
My useful pepper-owl!"

---

#### Note

This poem appears in Jewett's short story, "The Pepper Owl," *St. Nicholas* (3:492-496) in June 1876 and was collected in *Play Days* (1878).

In *St. Nicholas* it was illustrated by an unknown artist.

View the illustration here:

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015068521973&view=1up&seq=97&q1=pepper>

## A LOST DOLL.

The sunflowers hang their heavy heads  
And wish the sun would shine;  
The clouds are gray, the wind is cold.  
"Where is that doll of mine?  
The dark is coming fast," said she.  
"I'm in a dreadful fright.  
I don't know where I left my doll,  
And she'll be out all night.

"Twice up and down the garden-walks  
I looked; but she's not there.  
Oh! yes, I've hunted in the hay;  
I've hunted everywhere.  
I must have left her out of doors;  
But she is not in sight.  
No dolly in the summer-house,  
And she'll be out all night.

"The dew will wet her through and through  
And spoil her dear best dress;  
And she will wonder where I am  
And be in such distress!  
The dogs may find her in the grass,  
And bark or even bite;  
And all the bugs will frighten her  
That fly about at night.

"I've not been down into the woods  
Or by the brook to-day.  
I'm sure I had her in my arms  
When I came out to play,  
Just after dinner; then, I know,  
I watched Tom make his kite.  
Will anybody steal my doll  
If she stays out all night?

"I wonder where Papa has gone?  
Why, here he comes; and see!  
He's bringing something in his hand.  
That's Dolly, certainly!  
And so you found her in the chaise,  
And brought her home all right?  
I'll take her to the baby-house.  
I'm glad she's home to-night."

---

### Note

"A Lost Doll" appeared in *The Independent* (28:25) September 28, 1876.

## VERSES.

### I.

A sleeping giant in his cloak of grass --  
The strong great hill that lifts against the sky;  
And nothing wakes him, even when we climb  
Far up with careless footsteps, you and I.  
Though God's life is the life that moves the world,  
Our lives are still our own to hold and guide;  
And though all nature lives to show us God,  
Yet in it heart\* and consciousness abide.  
I more and more its faithful friendship know.  
And so, when restless and adrift, I keep  
Great comfort in a quietness like this; --  
An awful strength that lies in fearless sleep;  
On this great shoulder lay my head, nor miss  
The things I longed for but an hour ago.

### II.

It sometimes happens that two friends will meet  
And with a smile and touch of hands, again  
Go on their way along the noisy street:  
Each is so sure of all the friendship sweet,  
The loving silence gives no thought of pain.  
And so, I think, those friends whom we call dead  
Are with us. It may be some quiet hour  
Or time of busy work for hand or head --  
Their love fills all the heart that missed them so;  
They bring a sweet assurance of the life  
Serene, above the worry that we know;  
And we grow braver for the comfort brought.  
Why should we mourn because they do not speak  
Our words that lie so far below their thought?

---

## Notes

"Verses" appeared in *Sunday Afternoon* 1 (January - June 1878): 564.

*heart*. In a manuscript copy of Sonnet I, held by the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center in the Governor William and Mary Claflin Papers, GA-9, Box 4, Miscellaneous Folder J, Jewett varies this line: Yet in it soul and consciousness abide.

Two other differences in Sonnet I wording appear in a transcription from the William Claflin Papers included in transcriptions from mixed repositories in the Maine Women Writer's Collection, University of New England, Letters from Sarah Orne Jewett, 1875-1890, Folder 73, Burton Trafton Jewett Research Collection.

Line 3: And nothing awakes him, even when we climb

Line 9: I more and more its faithful friendships know.

## ONLY A DOLL!

Polly, my dolly! why don't you grow?  
Are you a dwarf, my Polly?  
I'm taller and taller every day;  
How high the grass is! -- do you see that?  
The flowers are growing like weeds, they say;  
The kitten is growing into a cat!  
Why don't you grow, my dolly ?

Here is a mark upon the wall.  
Look for yourself, my Polly!  
I made it a year ago, I think.  
I've measured you very often, dear,  
But, though you've plenty to eat and drink,  
You haven't grown a bit for a year.  
Why don't you grow, my dolly?

Are you never going to try to talk?  
You're such a silent Polly!  
Are you never going to say a word?  
It isn't hard; and oh! don't you see  
The parrot is only a little bird,  
But he can chatter so easily.  
You're quite a dunce, my dolly!

Let's go and play by the baby-house;  
You are my dearest Polly!  
There are other things that do not grow;  
Kittens can't talk, and why should you?  
You are the prettiest doll I know;  
You are a darling -- that is true!  
Just as you are, my dolly!

---

### Notes

"Only a Doll" appeared in *St. Nicholas* (5:552) June 1878, with an illustration that is probably by Jessie Curtis, about whom little is known. According to the *Dictionary of Woman Artists* (G. K. Hall), Curtis worked in Brooklyn in the late nineteenth century as an illustrator of books and New York weekly publications.

The illustration may be viewed here:

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101065274530&view=1up&seq=578&q1=jewett>

## AT HOME FROM CHURCH.

The lilacs in the sunshine lift  
Their plumes of dear old-fashioned flowers  
Whose fragrance fills the silent house  
Where, left alone, I count the hours.

High in the apple-trees the bees  
Are humming, busy in the sun;  
An idle robin cries for rain  
But once or twice, and then is done.

The Sunday morning stillness holds  
In heavy slumber all the street,  
While from the church just out of sight  
Behind the elms, comes slow and sweet

The organ's drone, the voices faint  
That sing the quaint long-metre hymn--\*  
I somehow feel as if shut out  
From some mysterious temple, dim

And beautiful with blue and red  
And golden lights from windows high,  
Where angels in the shadows stand,  
And earth seems very near the sky.

The day-dream fades, and so I try  
Again to catch the tune that brings  
No thought of temple or of priest,  
But only of a voice that sings.

---

### Notes

"At Home from Church" first appeared in *Sunday Afternoon* (3:481) June 1879.

*long-metre hymn*: a hymn-stanza of four lines, each containing eight syllables." (Source: *Oxford English Dictionary*).

## BOAT SONG.

Oh, rest your oars and let me drift  
While all the stars come out to see!  
The birds are talking in their sleep  
As we go by so silently.

The idle winds are in the pines;  
The ripples touch against the shore.  
Oh, rest your oars and let me drift,  
And let me dream forevermore!

The sweet wild roses hear and wake,  
And send their fragrance through the air;  
The hills are hiding in the dark,  
There is no hurry anywhere.  
The shadows close around the boat,  
Ah, why should we go back to shore!  
So rest your oars, and we will float  
Without a care forevermore.

Oh, little waves that splash and call,  
How fast you lead us out of sight!  
And we must follow where you go  
This strange and sweet midsummer night;  
The quiet river reaches far--  
The darkness covers all the shore;  
With idle oars we downward float  
In starlight dim forevermore.

---

### Notes

Weber and Weber report Jewett's statement that "The Boat Song" first appeared in a little paper published at a fair in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. However, this paper has not been located. Jewett also reported that "**Josef** Hoffman, the pianist, composed a musical setting for this poem 'and it was afterwards published by some music publishers.'" This music also has not been located. (Weber & Weber 24). John Austin Parker, "Sarah Orne Jewett's 'Boat Song,'" *American Literature* 23 (1951) reports, according to Nagel and Nagel's *Sarah Orne Jewett: A Reference Guide*, that "Among the uncatalogued materials of the Library of Congress is a copy of 'Boat Song,' words by Miss Sarah O. Jewett. Music by **Richd.** Hoffman. New York: G. Schirmer, c. 1879."

In correspondence of the 1890s, Jewett mentions becoming acquainted with the American pianist Mary Eliza O'Brion. Little has yet been discovered about O'Brion. News accounts and concert programs indicate that she was a reasonably well-known performer and teacher, including at Wellesley College. She is listed in concert programs at numerous venues, including with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Fairly often she plays duets with or is on the same program with the Latvian immigrant composer and pianist Olga von Radecki (1853-1933). Among von Radecki's compositions is a setting for "Boat Song" (copyright 1885, by Arthur P. Schmidt & Co.) .Von Radecki studied with Clara Schumann (1819-1896) and also was a successful international performer.

In her journal of 1909, Annie Fields has attached to the top of the page on which she first writes of Jewett's death a copy of this poem, clipped from an unknown printed source, where it

follows a poem by Deine Gretchen that ends "for me." The text varies from the one above. Following is this version, with the variations noted in bold.

**Now** rest your oars and let me drift  
While all the stars come out to see.  
The birds are talking in their sleep  
As we go by so silently.  
The idle winds are in the pines,  
The ripples touch against the shore,  
Oh [ **no comma** ] rest your oars and let me drift,  
And let me dream forevermore.

The sweet wild roses hear and wake,  
And send their fragrance through the air;  
The hills are hiding in the dark,  
There is no hurry anywhere,  
The shadows close around the boat,  
Ah, why should we go back to shore?  
So rest your oars [ **no comma** ] and we will float  
Without a care [ **no comma** ] forevermore.

Oh [ **no comma** ] little waves that splash and call,  
How fast you lead us out of sight!  
And we must follow where you go  
This strange and sweet midsummer night;  
The quiet river reaches far--  
The darkness covers all the shore,  
With idle oars we downward **drift**  
In starlight dim forevermore.

Fields's "Diary and Commonplace Book" 1907-1912, is held by the Massachusetts Historical Society: Annie Fields papers, 1847-1912, MS. N-1221. This transcription was made from a microfilm copy, available courtesy of the University of Kansas Libraries, Lawrence Kansas: Annie Adams Fields Papers 1852-1912. Folio PS 1669.F5 Z462, 1986, Reel 2.

## FLOWERS IN THE DARK.

Late in the evening, when the room had grown  
Too hot and tiresome with its flaring light  
And noise of voices, I stole out alone  
Into the darkness of the summer night.  
Down the long garden-walk I slowly went;  
A little wind was stirring in the trees;  
I only saw the whitest of the flowers,  
And I was sorry that the earlier hours  
Of that fair evening had been so ill spent,  
Because, I said, I am content with these  
Dear friends of mine who only speak to me  
With their delicious fragrance, and who tell  
To me their gracious welcome silently.  
The leaves that touch my hand with dew are wet;  
I find the tall white lilies I love well.  
I linger as I pass the mignonette,\*  
And what surprise could dearer be than this:  
To find my sweet rose waiting with a kiss!

### Notes

"Flowers in the Dark" first appeared in *Atlantic Monthly* (45:568) in March 1880, where the text is slightly different. The *Atlantic* text appears below.

*mignonette*: "A plant (*Reseda odorata*) cultivated for the fragrance of its blossoms. When trained to grow with a bushy head it is known as *tree-mignonette*. *wild mignonette*, the plant *R. luteola*. The ordinary Fr. name for mignonette is *réséda*; but Littré says that *mignonnette* is applied to this plant as well as to several others." (Source: *Oxford English Dictionary*).

### FLOWERS IN THE DARK (*Atlantic* text)

Late in the evening, when the room had grown  
Too hot, and tiresome with its flaring light  
And noise of voices, I stole out alone  
Into the darkness of the summer night.  
Down the long garden walk I slowly went.  
A little wind was stirring in the trees;  
I only saw the whitest of the flowers,  
And I was sorry that the earlier hours  
Of that fair evening had been so ill-spent;  
Because, I said, I am content with these  
Dear friends of mine, who only speak to me  
With their delicious fragrance, and who tell  
To me their gracious welcome silently.  
The leaves that touch my hand with dew are wet;  
I find the tall white lilies I love well;  
I linger as I pass the mignonette;  
And what surprise could sweeter be than this,  
To find a late rose waiting with a kiss!



## VERSES FOR A LETTER.

Did you send out a little white moth  
On an errand to-night?  
For one hovered and lingered about  
With a flutter so light:

A tired little moth, with his wings  
Like a flower that had blown  
All away on the breath of a wind  
That had kissed it and flown.

Did you tell him to hurry, and fly  
Through the shadows so fast,  
Because I would wait all alone  
Till the twilight was past?

For later the lamps would be lit,  
And I should go down  
To listen to laughter and talk  
Of the news of the town.

But my own time is just at the hour  
While the clouds fade away; --  
I could not help wishing for you,  
And my thoughts were astray.

And the little white moth fluttered in  
With the love you had sent;  
My heart in that minute could tell  
Just the words you had meant.

I knew we were so far apart,  
I was tired and sad;  
But the little moth brought me your love,  
And then I was glad.

---

### Note

"Verses for a Letter" appeared in *Atlantic Monthly* (45:568-569) in April 1880.

## A NIGHT IN JUNE.

THE starlight from one clear, bright star,  
The moonlight, faint and white  
From the little moon, low in the sky,  
Shone in my face on the hill, where I  
Have thought of you to-night.  
There was just the last of the sunset left,  
Pale-yellow in the west,  
And a sleepy bobolink flew by,\*  
And dropped into its nest;  
And the field was full of daisies,  
That nodded, and waved, and bowed;  
The wind was so little it could not play  
At once with all the crowd,  
And the daisies bowed to the star and  
moon,  
And I called you once aloud.  
The nearest daisies looked at me  
Because they heard me call;  
And they told each other what I had said,  
Though they did not hear it all.  
And I stood there wishing for you,  
All alone on the hill;  
While far below were the fields asleep,  
And above, the sky so still.  
In the twilight the daisies were busy,  
And they nodded and looked around  
At each other, and bowed to begin a dance;  
But their feet never moved from the  
ground.  
Oh, the little wind blew, and I watched them  
Till I felt like a daisy, too;  
And more kept blooming, it seemed to me;  
And they knew I thought of you.  
The star went higher, and the moon grew  
bright,

And the sunset was almost lost,  
And the trees below looked black as the  
night,  
But the daisies were white like frost;  
And the mountains so far, and so blue by  
day,  
Looked dark against the west,  
So grave and still in their solemn gloom,  
And the world was all at rest.  
But the daisies nodded and looked at me,  
And still they bowed and played;  
Like children in church, they were merry  
still,  
And why should they be afraid?  
I looked up at the hills and down at the  
fields  
All dim with shadows, dear;  
Then looked at the sky, and I hid my face,  
For its light grew strangely clear.  
The flowers were so white that they dazzled  
me,  
And the wind blew against my face;  
And the stars seemed nearer than lights  
below,  
While I stood in that lonely place.

---

### Notes

"A Night in June" was published in *The Christian Union* (22:4) July 7, 1880.

*bobolink*: a North American song bird nesting in grass or marsh land; its characteristic call is rendered as "bob o lincoln."

## TWO MORNINGS.

In armor strong the fearless knight  
At daybreak rode away,  
And from her window in the tower  
The lady watched all day.

There stood that morning by the gate  
A little page, to see,  
And wished to be, in years to come,  
As grand a knight as he.

All day the idle echoes brought,  
Like noises in a dream,  
The roar of fighting from afar,  
The dashing of a stream;

And when the stars came, one by one,  
The lady could not sleep;  
She feared the shadows in the room,  
She heard the waters leap.

The daylight lingered ere it came,  
And hardly with surprise  
She heard the tale the servants brought,  
With terror in their eyes;

How at the close-barred castle gate  
At daybreak they had found  
The knight's horse, which came drooping in,  
Weak with a mortal wound.

Oh, all forlorn and riderless,  
Stained with his master's blood,  
With human sorrow in his look,  
He hurt and trembling stood.

The lady did not speak. She came  
Beside the horse to stand;  
She kissed the bridle where the knight  
Had held it in his hand;

And all that day she longed and feared  
To hear the soldiers' tread,  
When they came marching up the glen  
To bring the knight home dead.

She wished the women would not wail;  
She hoped that she might die;  
She longed to be the little page,  
Who hid himself to cry.

---

### Note

"Two Mornings" was published with this illustration in *Harper's Monthly* (62:78) December 1880. The illustration is initialed A. F. on the lower left. Lynn Sky has helped to identify this signature as that of Alfred Fredericks (d. 1926). Illustrations attributed to him in other publications have the same signature.

According to *Who was Who in American Art* (1999), Fredericks was a landscape and figure painter as well as an illustrator. He lived in New York City and exhibited at the National Academy and the Pennsylvania Academy in the 1850s and 1860s, the Brooklyn Academy in the 1880s, and in Boston through much of his career -- 1875-1907. Sky adds that Fredericks was one of the eleven founding members of the American Watercolor Society and a mentor to Thomas Nast.

View the illustration here:

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015056091195&view=1up&seq=92&q1=two%20mornings>

## IN A CHRISTMAS LETTER.

We are so close together  
Though you are far away,  
God bless my darling and keep her safe,  
I whisper when I pray;  
Dear friend, we are each others now,  
And it is Christmas day.

The sun will shine in your face and mine,  
And the wind will bring me word,  
And you and I will know all day  
That our hearts are strangely stirred -  
Just now I almost saw your face,  
And when you spoke I heard.

On Christmas Day, in the morning,  
My dear, I thought of you,  
And I said, I have no better gift  
Than a friend so dear and true;  
A love that is mine to the end of time,  
And will last my whole life through.

---

### Note

"In a Christmas Letter" appeared in *The American* (1:167) [a weekly journal], Philadelphia, December 25, 1880.

## A DAY'S SECRET.

DEAR friend, to-day was dull and hot and long,  
And everybody grumbled at the weather --  
There never was such heat and dust together;  
Yet I was listening to the sweetest song:  
I did not care if everything went wrong.  
And no one knew it was our holiday,  
For they would have thought that you are far away.  
I do not know if I have said your name.  
Were I alone or in some busy throng,  
Idle or hurried all the summer hours,  
We should have been together just the same:  
Your thoughts have come to me like fairest flowers,  
And no one knew our hearts kept lovingly  
The day that is so dear to you and me.

---

### Notes

"A Day's Secret" appeared in *The Christian Union* (23:4), January 26, 1881.

### Manuscript transcription

Dear friend, today was dull and hot and long  
And every body grumbled at the weather.  
There never was such heat and dust together;  
-- But I was listening to the sweetest song.  
I did not care if every thing went wrong --  
And no one knew it was our holiday.  
They would have said that you are far away.  
Were I alone or in some busy throng,  
Idle or hurried all the summer hours  
We should have been together just the same,  
Your thoughts have come to me like fairest flowers.  
And no one knew our hearts kept lovingly  
The day that is so dear to you and me.

[The next appears to be a rejected part.]

That holiday will dearer still  
Seem to us both when far apart.  
And I am glad because we found  
A harbour in each other's heart! --

Transcribed from MS Am 1745.24 (1) at the Houghton Library, Harvard University.  
There are a couple parts to this. I've transcribed only what I think is the fair copy that begins with this title.

## TWO MUSICIANS.

I.

When one with skillful fingers swift as wind  
Swept to and fro along the glittering keys,  
I said: I wish I were away from these  
Clattering and noisy players! but resigned  
Myself to listen, and I tried to seize  
Upon some meaning in the tune I heard.  
But in my ears the harsh notes rang and whirred;  
It was as if I listened carelessly  
Among a crowd of people coarse and rude,  
Who talked in shrillest tones of grudge or feud,  
Though only seldom one could catch a word.  
Even their voices were a bore to me;  
I pictured their dull faces, till released  
From such companions, when the music ceased.

II.

But when the second player struck a note  
And fingered softly out a gentle air -  
It was like coming from that turmoil where  
I waited, to a light Venetian boat,  
Idly to glide among the shadows, there  
Where one may drift and dream; and suddenly  
One deep sweet voice sang such a song to me.  
I listened, and I followed far away -  
No music ever sent me so astray, -  
I never could call back the tale it told,  
But all the world seemed lost, as when, one day,  
I laid me down upon a high cliff's crest,  
Warm with the sunshine, there alone to rest,  
While far below the great waves shoreward rolled.

---

### Note

"Two Musicians" appeared in *The American* (1:270), [a weekly journal], Philadelphia, February 5, 1881.

## SHELTERED.

It was a cloudy, dismal day, and I was all alone,  
For early in the morning John Earl and Nathan Stone  
Came riding up the lane to say - I saw they both looked pale -  
That Anderson the murderer had broken out of jail.

They only stopped a minute, to tell my man that he  
Must go to the four corners, where all the folks would be;  
They were going to hunt the country, for he only had been gone  
An hour or so when they missed him, that morning just at dawn.

John never finished his breakfast; he saddled the old white mare.  
She seemed to know there was trouble, and galloped as free and fair  
And even a gait as she ever struck when she was a five-year-old:  
The knowingest beast we ever had, and worth her weight in gold.

He turned in the saddle and called to me - I watched him from the door.  
"I sha'n't be home to dinner," says he, "but I'll be back by four.  
I'd fasten the doors if I was you, and keep at home to-day;"  
And a little chill come over me as I watched him ride away.

I went in and washed the dishes - I was sort of scary too.  
We had 'ranged to go away that day. I hadn't much to do,  
Though I always had some sewing work, and I got it and sat down;  
But the old clock tick-tacked loud at me, and I put away the gown.

I thought the story over: how Anderson had been  
A clever, steady fellow, so far 's they knew, till then.  
Some said his wife had tried him, but he got to drinking hard,  
Till last he struck her with an axe and killed her in the yard.

The only thing I heard he said was, he was most to blame;  
But he fought the men that took him like a tiger. 'Twas a shame  
He'd got away; he ought to swing: a man that killed his wife  
And broke her skull in with an axe - he ought to lose his life!

Our house stood in a lonesome place, the woods were all around,  
But I could see for quite a ways across the open ground;  
I couldn't help, for the life o' me, a-looking now and then  
All along the edge o' the growth, and listening for the men.

I thought they would find Anderson: he couldn't run till night,  
For the farms were near together, and there must be a sight  
Of men out hunting for him; but when the clock struck three,  
A neighbor's boy came up with word that John had sent to me.

He would be home by five o'clock. They'd scour the woods till dark;  
Some of the men would be off all night, but he and Andrew Clark  
Would keep watch round his house and ours - I should not stay alone.  
Poor John, he did the best he could, but what if he had known!

The boy could hardly stop to tell that the se-lec'men had said  
They would pay fifty dollars for the man alive or dead,  
And I felt another shiver go over me, for fear  
That John might get that money, though we were pinched that year.

I felt a little easier then, and went to work again:  
The sky was getting cloudier, 'twas coming on to rain.  
Before I knew, the clock struck six, and John had not come back;  
The rain began to spatter down, and all the sky was black.

I thought and thought, what shall I do if I'm alone all night!  
I wa'n't so brave as I am now. I lit another light,  
And I stirred round and got supper, but I ate it all alone.  
The wind was blowing more and more - I hate to hear it moan.

I was cutting rags to braid a rug - I sat there by the fire;  
I wished I'd kep' the dog at home; the gale was rising higher;  
I own I had hard thoughts o' John; I said he had no right  
To leave his wife in that lonesome place alone that dreadful night.

And then I thought of the murderer, afraid of God and man;  
I seemed to follow him all the time, whether he hid or ran;  
I saw him crawl on his hands and knees through the icy mud in the rain,  
And I wondered if he didn't wish he was back in his home again.

I fell asleep for an hour or two, and then I woke with a start;  
A feeling come across me that took and stopped my heart;  
I was 'fraid to look behind me; then I felt my heart begin;  
And I saw right at the window-pane two eyes a-looking in.

I couldn't look away from them - the face was white as clay.  
Those eyes, they make me shudder when I think of them to-day.  
I knew right off 'twas Anderson. I couldn't move nor speak;  
I thought I'd slip down on the floor, I felt so light and weak.

"O Lord," I thought, "what shall I do!" Some words begun to come,  
Like some one whispered to me: I set there, still and dumb:  
"I was a stranger - took me in - in prison - visited me;"\*  
And I says, "O Lord, I couldn't; it's a murderer, you see!"

And those eyes they watched me all the time, in dreadful, still despair -  
Most like the room looked warm and safe; he watched me setting there;  
And what 'twas made me do it, I don't know to this day,  
But I opened the door and let him in - a murderer at bay.

He laid him right down on the floor, close up beside the fire.  
I never saw such a wretched sight: he was covered thick with mire;  
His clothes were torn to his very skin, and his hands were bleeding fast.  
I gave him something to tie 'em up, and all my fears were past.

I filled the fire-place up with wood to get the creature warm,  
And I fetched him a bowl o' milk to drink - I couldn't do him harm;  
And pretty soon he says, real low, "Do you know who I be?"  
And I says, "You lay there by the fire; I know you won't hurt me."

I had been fierce as any one before I saw him there,  
But I pitied him - a ruined man whose life had started fair.  
I some how or 'nother never felt that I was doing wrong,  
And I watched him laying there asleep almost the whole night long.

I thought once that I heard the men, and I was half afraid  
That they might come and find him there; and so I went and staid  
Close to the window, watching, and listening for a cry;  
And he slept there like a little child - forgot his misery.



I almost hoped John wouldn't come till he could get away;  
And I went to the door and harked awhile, and saw the dawn of day.  
'Twas bad for him to have slept so long, but I couldn't make him go  
From the City of Refuge\* he had found; and he was glad, I know.

It was years and years ago, but still I never can forget  
How gray it looked that morning; the air was cold and wet;  
Only the wind would howl sometimes, or else the trees would creak -  
All night I'd 'a given anything to hear somebody speak.

He heard me shut the door again, and started up so wild  
And haggard that I 'most broke down. I wasn't reconciled  
To have the poor thing run all day, chased like a wolf or bear;  
But I knew he'd brought it on himself; his punishment was fair.

I gave him something more to eat; he couldn't touch it then.  
"God pity you, poor soul!" says I. May I not see again  
A face like his, as he stood in the door and looked which way to go!  
I watched him making toward the swamps, dead-lame and moving slow.

He had hardly spoken a word to me, but as he went away  
He thanked me, and gave me such a look! 'twill last to my dying day.  
"May God have mercy on me, as you have had!" says he;  
And I choked, and couldn't say a word, and he limped away from me.

John came home bright and early. He'd fell and hurt his head,  
And he stopped up to his father's; but he'd sent word, he said,  
And told the boy to fetch me there - my cousin, Johnny Black -  
But he went off with some other folks, who thought they'd found the track.

Oh yes, they did catch Anderson, early that afternoon,  
And carried him back to jail again, and tried and hung him soon.  
Justice is justice; but I say, although they served him right,  
I'm glad I harbored the murderer that stormy April night.

Some said I might have locked him up, and got the town reward;  
But I couldn't have done it if I'd starved, and I do hope the Lord  
Forgave it, if it was a sin; but I could never see  
'Twas wrong to shelter a hunted man, trusting his life to me.

Sometimes I think - I'm getting old - that when I come to die  
Out of the stormy night of life, sinful and tired, I  
Shall be let in; and Anderson will meet me if he can,  
For he repented, so they say, and died a Christian man.

---

## Notes

"Sheltered" appeared in *Harper's Monthly* (63: 444-446), August 1881. Jewett's name appears in the contents, but not with the poem.

*"I was a stranger - took me in - in prison - visited me"*: See Matthew 25:40-46.

*City of Refuge*: See Numbers 35:25-32; also Joshua 21 and 1 Chronicles 6.

## ON STAR ISLAND.

High on the lichened ledges, like  
A lonely sea-fowl on its perch,  
Blown by the cold sea winds, it stands,  
Old Gosport's quaint, forsaken church.

No sign is left of all the town  
Except a few forgotten graves;  
But to and fro the white sails go  
Slowly across the glittering waves.

And summer idlers stray about  
With curious questions of the lost  
And vanished village, and its men,  
Whose boats by these same waves were  
tossed.

I wonder if the old church dreams  
About its parish, and the days  
The fisher people came to hear  
The preaching and the songs of praise!

Rough-handed, browned by sun and wind,  
Heedless of fashion or of creed,  
They listened to the parson's words --  
Their pilot heavenward indeed.

Their eyes on week-days sought the church,  
Their surest landmark, and the guide  
That led them in from far at sea,  
Until they anchored safe beside

The harbor-wall that braved the storm  
With its resistless strength of stone.  
Those busy fishers all are gone -  
The church is standing here alone.

But still I hear their voices strange,  
And still I see the people go  
Over the ledges to their homes:  
The bent old women's footsteps slow;

The faithful parson stop to give  
Some timely word to one astray;  
The little children hurrying on  
Together, chattering of their play.

I know the blue sea covered some,  
And others in the rocky ground  
Found narrow lodgings for their bones -  
God grant their rest is sweet and sound!

I saw the worn rope idle hang  
Beside me in the belfry brown.

I gave the bell a solemn toll -  
I rang the knell for Gosport town.

---

### Notes

"On Star Island" first appeared in *Harper's Magazine* (63:550-551), September 1881. A different version was reprinted in *Verses* (1916). Weber and Weber report that the poem was written at Isles of the Shoals, July 26, 1880 (25). Rita Gollin says, in *Annie Fields: Woman of Letters* (2002), that the friendship of Jewett and Annie Fields began when they met on Star Island:

When Sarah arrived with her friend Cora Clark Rice at the Oceanic Hotel on Star Island, one of the Isles of the Shoals, she found "a great many Boston people there whom I knew" including the Fieldses. She and Annie then wandered about the island together, explored the deserted village of Gosport, and climbed to the belfry of its church. (216)

The poem, says Gollin, commemorates that meeting. "Annie would soon see 'our' Gosport poem in *Harper's*, Sarah said: "I feel that you and I are partners in those verses."

The poem was illustrated by an artist not yet identified. A monogram appears on the lower right corner that seems to consist of the initials MYT or perhaps just MT, in top to bottom order.

View the illustration here:

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.31210005963945&view=1up&seq=565&q1=star%20island>

## "Star Island" from Verses 1916

High on the lichened ledges, like  
A lonely sea-fowl on its perch,  
Blown by the cold sea-winds it stands,  
The quaint, forsaken Gosport church.

No sign is left of all the town  
Except a few forgotten graves;  
But to and fro the white sails go  
Slowly across the glittering waves.

And summer idlers stray about,  
With curious questions of the lost  
And vanished village and its men  
Whose boats by these same waves were tossed.

I wonder if the old church dreams  
About its parish, and the days  
The fisher-people came to hear  
The preaching and the songs of praise.

Rough-handed, browned with sun and wind,  
Heedless of fashion or of creed,  
They listened to the parson's words--  
Their pilot heavenward indeed.

Their eyes on week-days sought the church,  
Their surest landmark, and the guide  
That led them home from far at sea,  
Until they anchored safe beside.

The harbor-wall still braves the storm  
With its resistless strength of stone.  
Now busy fishers all are gone,  
The church is standing here alone.

I know the blue sea covers some,  
And others in the rocky ground  
Found narrow lodgings for their bones.  
God grant their rest is sweet and sound!

I saw the worn rope idle hang  
Beside me in the belfry brown.  
I gave the bell a solemn toll:-  
I rang the knell for Gosport town.

## THE SOUL OF THE SUNFLOWER.

The warm sun kissed the earth  
To consecrate thy birth,  
And from his close embrace  
Thy radiant face  
Sprang into sight,  
A blossoming delight.

Through the long summer days  
Thy lover's burning rays  
Shone hot upon thy heart.  
Thy life was part  
Of his desire,  
Thou passion-flower of fire!

And, turning toward his love,  
Lifting thy head above  
The earth that nurtured thee,  
Thy majesty  
And stately mien  
Proclaims thee sun-crowned queen.

On earth, thy gorgeous bloom  
Bears record of thy tomb,  
And to transcendent light  
Thy soul takes flight  
Till thou art one,  
O sunflower, with the sun!

---

### Note

"The Soul of the Sunflower" appeared in *Scribner's Magazine* (22:942) in October 1881.

## AT WAKING.

I heard the city bells at morning ring,  
The eastern sky was faintly tinged with light;  
The tired town in heavy sleep lay still,  
And yet I knew it was no longer night.

One, two, three, four, the bells struck one by one,  
In answering steeples that were far away;  
Who could help wondering what the morn might bring,  
Who waked, like me, between the dark and day?

---

### Note

"At Waking" appeared in *The Sword and the Pen* #7, p. 1, on December 14, 1881. This volume was published in a series of ten numbers from December 7 through December 17, 1881 and thereafter sold as a bound collection for the Soldiers' Home Bazaar in Boston. This text is available courtesy of the Newberry Library.

## A COUNTRY BOY IN WINTER.

THE wind may blow the snow about,  
For all I care, says Jack,  
And I don't mind how cold it grows,  
For then the ice won't crack.  
Old folks may shiver all day long,  
But I shall never freeze;  
What cares a jolly boy like me  
For winter days like these?

Far down the long snow-covered hills  
It is such fun to coast,  
So clear the road! the fastest sled  
There is in school I boast.  
The paint is pretty well worn off,  
But then I take the lead;  
A dandy sled's a loiterer,  
And I go in for speed.

When I go home at supper-time,  
Ki! but my cheeks are red!  
They burn and sting like anything;  
I'm cross until I'm fed.  
You ought to see the biscuit go,  
I am so hungry then;  
And old Aunt Polly says that boys  
Eat twice as much as men.

There's always something I can do  
To pass the time away;  
The dark comes quick in winter-time--  
A short and stormy day  
And when I give my mind to it,

It's just as father says,  
I almost do a man's work now,  
And help him many ways.

I shall be glad when I grow up  
And get all through with school,  
I'll show them by-and-by that I  
Was not meant for a fool.  
I'll take the crops off this old farm,  
I'll do the best I can.  
A jolly boy like me won't be  
A dolt when he's a man.

I like to hear the old horse neigh  
Just as I come in sight,  
The oxen poke me with their horns  
To get their hay at night.  
Somehow the creatures seem like friends,  
And like to see me come.  
Some fellows talk about New York,  
But I shall stay at home.

---

### Note

"A Country Boy in Winter" appeared in *Harper's Young People* (3:194) for January 24, 1882. It was reprinted in John Hollander, *American Poetry: The Nineteenth Century*, v. 2 (1993) p. 466.

## MISSING.

You walked beside me, quick and free;  
With lingering touch you grasped my hand;  
Your eyes looked laughingly in mine;  
And now – I can not understand.

I long for you, I mourn for you,  
Through all the dark and lonely hours.  
Heavy the weight the pallmen\* lift,  
And cover silently with flowers.

---

### Notes

"Missing" appeared in *Harper's Magazine* (64: 499) in March 1882.

*pallmen*: pall bearers.

## WAITING.

I can't believe my wedding day was fifty years ago!  
This is the second day of March! The clock is ticking slow;  
The sun shines in across the room. Just see the folks go by!  
I can't remember half of them who nod so pleasantly.

The little English sparrows\* flit in the lilac bush outside;  
I like to watch the busy things. There's one that's tried and tried  
To break a string the children tied around a branch one day;  
How hard he pulls it with his beak! Now he has flown away.

So it was fifty years ago! It doesn't seem so long.  
I've felt my age more this last year, and yet I'm pretty strong.  
I don't do much about the house, but still I know what's done;  
I know as well what's going on as Jane or any one.

Jane frets me dreadfully sometimes and yet she's always kind,  
She helps me when there is no need and has me on her mind;  
She needn't think I'm past all use or that I'm like to fall;  
I've never missed my footing yet, though I'm so old and all.

But things don't seem to take my mind that happen nowadays.  
I like the folks I used to know; I keep old-fashioned ways;  
I read the Psalms and Book of John and find them always new;  
And I can knit, but I can't sew same as I used to do.

The young folks think they understand just how to manage life;  
We old folks pity them; we've learnt its change and loss and strife.  
Life is a fight I tell you plain, it doesn't come to hand  
Just as you want to have it come or just as you have planned.

If you'd foretold me how it's been through all these fifty years  
I should have been discouraged and had no lack of fears,  
And wished I could lie down and die, but somehow I've had strength  
That's come to me with every day all through my whole life's length.

I started fair my wedding day, for my dear man was kind  
And always pleasant spoken; we were mostly of a mind.  
Of course we had our fallings out but nothing that would last;  
It always was my fault, for I was young and spoke too fast.

And John, you see, was older by some ten years than I.  
At first I was afraid of him when we kept company.  
He was a sort of man on whom you felt you could depend,  
But very quiet in his ways. His mother was a Friend.\*

My hardest time was when he died. It seemed to me 'twas wrong  
The Lord should take him out of life and let me drag along  
As best I could, with little means and all my children small,  
Just when we seemed to see our way and get ahead at all.

But God knows best. If it had been my life had suited me;  
If I had had an easy time, and not known poverty,



I should have been a flighty thing without a bit of sense.  
I turned my hand to everything -- to knit or build a fence.

There weren't the folks to call on then that I could get to-day,  
For help was scarce, the farms were few, and I'd no means to pay.  
I went to work with all my might and tried my home to keep.  
But I can tell you many a night I've cried myself to sleep.

I know the Lord has prospered me. I've done the best I could,  
And I've stood in my lot and place as anybody should.  
The farm-land some folks would have sold I held, because I knew  
Some day 't would be good property, and all my hopes come true.

I've parted with it piece by piece -- you see the town has grown,  
Just as John always said it would. If other folks had known  
And had the foresight that he had! Instead of that they told  
How I should never get along unless the farm was sold.

My boys grew fast and soon took hold, and then my way was plain,  
For all the money they had cost they soon brought back again;  
And like a busy hive of bees we were from morn till night;  
We had our health, the Lord be thanked! and that made work seem light.

The children all have settled down in good homes of their own,  
Excepting Jane, and but for her I should be left alone;  
She had her chances too, but then she's not the marrying kind:  
I couldn't do without her now, I'm glad she stayed behind.

I'm glad I'm mistress of my house; the children often say  
I must break up, that Jane and I were better off to stay  
With some of them, for I'm so old and Jane's not over strong;  
But I won't listen to their plans; I've made my own too long.

My life seems like a book that's read and put up on the shelf;  
I used to be a hurrying round; I don't feel like myself;  
Sometimes I'm tired of keeping still, I want to be at work;  
I see so many things to do and I don't like to shirk.

I used to have to toil and plan, and now I have to wait,  
And I suppose I mustn't fret, but in a future state  
I shall be sure to find my place and be some use again,  
For there we still shall serve the Lord -- the Scripture says it plain.\*

So it's my golden wedding day, though we have been apart  
For forty years, and yet John knows that he has kept my heart,  
And I know that he looks for me and waits for me to come;  
I've tried to do the best I could -- and here or there it's home!

---

## Notes

"Waiting" was published in *Our Continent* (1:172), April 26, 1882. This publication included etchings by W. T. Smedley. William Thomas Smedley (1858-1920) was born in Chester County, Pennsylvania and studied in Philadelphia, New York, and Paris. He worked as an engraver and illustrator, travelling widely to collect images. (Source: *Mantle Fielding's Dictionary of American Painters, Sculptors, and Engravers*). He also illustrated the original publication of Jewett's short story, "The Flight of Betsey Lane" in *Scribner's Magazine*, August 1893, collected in *A Native of Winby*.

View illustration here:

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.319510021488628&view=1up&seq=186>

*English sparrows*: Now generally known as the house sparrow, *Passer domesticus*, this European sparrow was imported to the Americas where it has become one of the most numerous of birds.

*a Friend*: a member of the Society of Friends or Quakers.

*there we still shall serve the Lord*: Possible references include: Daniel 7:13-14, and 27; Psalms 102:20-22.

## THE EAGLE TREES.

to J. G. W.

Great pines that watch the river go  
Down to the sea all night, all day,  
Firm-rooted near its ebb and flow,  
Bowling their heads to winds at play,  
Strong-limbed and proud, they silent stand,  
And watch the mountains far away,  
And watch the miles of farming land,  
And hear the church bells tolling slow.  
They see the men in distant fields  
Follow the furrows of the plough;  
They count the loads the harvest yields,  
And fight the storms with every bough,  
Beating the wild winds back again.  
The April sunshine cheers them now;  
They eager drink the warm spring rain,  
Nor dread the spear the lightning wield.  
High in the branches clings the nest  
The great birds build from year to year;  
And though they fly from east to west,  
Some instinct keeps this eyrie dear  
To their fierce hearts; and now their eyes  
Glare down at me with rage and fear;  
They stare at me with wild surprise,  
Where high in air they strong-winged rest.  
Companionship of birds and trees!  
The years have proved your friendship  
strong,  
You share each other's memories,  
The river's secret and its song,  
And legends of the country-side;  
The eagles take their journey long,  
The great trees wait in noble pride  
For messages from hills and seas.  
I hear a story that you tell  
In idleness of summer days:  
A singer that the world knows well  
To you again in boyhood strays;  
Within the stillness of your shade  
He rests where flickering sunlight plays,  
And sees the nest the eagles made,  
And wonders at the distant bell.  
His keen eyes watch the forest growth,  
The rabbits' fear, the thrushes' flight;  
He loiters gladly, nothing loath  
To be alone at fall of night,  
The woodland things around him taught

Their secrets in the evening light,  
Whispering some wisdom to his thought  
Known to the pines and eagles both.  
Was it the birds who early told  
The dreaming boy that he would win  
A poet's crown instead of gold?  
That he would fight a nation's sin? --  
On eagle wings of song would gain  
A place that few might enter in,  
And keep his life without a stain  
Through many years, yet not grow old?  
And he shall be what few men are,  
Said all the pine-trees, whispering low;  
His thought shall find an unseen star;  
He shall our treasured legends know:  
His words will give the way-worn rest  
Like this cool shade our branches throw;  
He, lifted like our loftiest crest,  
Shall watch his country near and far.

---

### Notes

"The Eagle Trees" appeared in *Harper's Magazine* (66:608), March 1883 and in *The Poets of Maine*, edited by George Bancroft Smith (Portland, ME: Elwell, Pickard, & Co., 1888). The anthology arrangement appears here. The *Harper's* version is identical with that in the anthology, except that in the magazine version, there is no line indentation; all lines begin at the left margin.

The following introductory text appears with the poem in the anthology.

This talented authoress, the daughter of Dr. Theodore Herman Jewett, a graduate of Bowdoin, was born in South Berwick, Sept. 3, 1849; was educated at home and in the Berwick Academy, and has traveled extensively, often with her intimate friend, Mrs. Annie Fields -- wife of the late distinguished author and publisher -- and herself a writer of repute, in Europe, Canada, and the United States. In addition to contributions to the leading magazines,

Miss Jewett is the author of several very popular books. "Deephaven," published in Boston, 1877; "Play-Days," 1878; "Old Friends and New," 1880; "Country By-Ways," 1881; "The Mate of the Daylight," 1883; "A Country Doctor," 1884; "A Marsh Island," 1885; "A White Heron," 1886; and "The Story of the Normans" (New York) 1887. Miss Jewett's father, before referred to, who died at Crawford Notch, in the White Mountains, Sept. 20, 1878, was president of the Maine Medical society, and made many important contributions to current medical literature.

In "Recollections of Whittier," Mary Rice Jewett remembers Sarah Jewett and John Greenleaf Whittier talking about an eagle tree along the river, probably at Sligo Point. Whittier and Jewett were close friends who admired each other's work. See, for example, her dedication of *The King of Folly Island*.

Carl J. Weber published a version of this poem based on a manuscript Jewett sent to Whittier in 1882. Jewett indicates that the manuscript accompanied her letter to Whittier of 16 May 1882 ("Yours Always Lovingly": Sarah Orne Jewett to John Greenleaf Whittier, Edited by Richard Cary, *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 107 [1971]: 429-30). At the time Weber published the poem and his accompanying article in *The New England Quarterly* 18#3 (Sept. 1945) 401-407, he had not yet located the above anthology publication.

Following is a summary of the ways in which the manuscript differs from the published version.

1. The arrangement on the page is different. Here is the first stanza from the manuscript.

Great pines that watch the river go  
 Down to the sea all night all day,  
 Firm-rooted near its ebb and flow,  
 Bowing their heads to winds at play:  
 Strong-limbed and proud they silent  
 stand  
 And watch the mountains far away,

And watch the miles of farming land  
 And hear the church bells tolling slow.

Notice also that the punctuation is different in lines 2, 4, 5, 7.

2. Stanzas 4 & 5 of the anthology version do not appear in the manuscript.

3. Stanza 4 of the manuscript does not appear in the anthology version; here is stanza 4 of the manuscript.

I will not trespass in this place  
 Nor storm the eagles' castle-walls,  
 Where winds have rocked the royal  
 race  
 And taught the note the young bird  
 calls  
 Rejoicing as he seeks the cloud,  
 And spreads his wings and never falls  
 Like weaker birds; but soaring  
 proud  
 A king at heart, he conquers space.

4. Other manuscript lines that vary from the anthology publication

Stanza 2

3 They count the loads the harvest yields  
 6 The April sunshine cheers them now  
 7 They eager drink the warm Spring rain

Stanza 3

2 The great birds build from year to year  
 6 Glare down at me with rage and fear,  
 7 They stare at me with wild surprise

Stanza 6

3 He loiters gladly, nothing loth  
 4 To be alone at fall of night.  
 5 The silent things around him taught  
 7 Whispered some wisdom to his thought,

Stanza 7

4 That he would fight a nation's sin,

Stanza 8

4 He shall our treasured legends know;  
 6 Like this cool shade our branches throw,

## PERSEVERANCE.

Dear Polly, these are joyful days!  
Your feet can choose their own sweet ways;  
You have no care of anything.  
Free as a swallow on the wing,  
You hunt the hay-field over  
To find a four-leaved clover.

But this I tell you, Polly dear,  
One thing in life you need not fear:  
Bad luck, I'm certain, never haunts  
A child who works for what she wants,  
And hunts a hay-field over  
To find a four-leaved clover!

The little leaf is not so wise  
As it may seem in foolish eyes;  
But then, dear Polly, don't you see,  
Since you were willing carefully  
To hunt the hay-field over,  
You found your four-leaved clover!

Your patience may have long to wait,  
Whether in little things or great,  
But all good luck, you soon will learn,  
Must come to those who nobly earn.  
Who hunts the hay-field over  
Will find the four-leaved clover.

---

### Notes

"Perseverance" appeared with an illustration in *St. Nicholas Magazine* (10:840-841), September 1883. It was collected in *Verses 1916*, with a new title and an additional stanza.

The illustration was by Rose Mueller. Rose Mueller Sprague (1862-1924) was an author and illustrator. Her illustrated story, "A Singular Performance" appears in *Cat Stories: Retold from St. Nicholas*, edited by M. H. Carter (New York: Century, 1904), pp. 80-90.

View the illustration here:

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101065274845&view=1up&seq=375&q1=perseverance>

### A FOUR-LEAVED CLOVER

*Verses 1916*

Dear Polly, these are joyful days!  
Your feet can choose their own sweet ways;  
You have no care of anything.  
Free as a swallow on the wing,  
You hunt the hayfield over  
To find a four-leaved clover.

But this I tell you, Polly dear,  
One thing in life you need not fear:  
Bad luck, I'm certain, never haunts  
A child who hunts for what she wants,  
And hunts a hayfield over  
To find a four-leaved clover.

The little leaf is not so wise  
As it may seem in foolish eyes;  
But then, dear Polly, don't you see  
If you are willing carefully  
To hunt the hayfield over,  
You find your four-leaved clover?

Your patience may have long to wait,  
Whether in little things or great,  
But all good luck, you soon will learn,  
Must come to those who nobly earn.  
Who hunts the hayfield over  
Will find the four-leaved clover!

Now put it in your dear trig shoe--  
Lovers by scores will flock to you.  
Dear Polly, you will always find  
Both friends and fortune true and kind;  
So hunt the hayfield over

## DUNLUCE CASTLE.

To-day from all thy ruined walls  
The flowers wave flags of truce;  
For Time has proved thy conqueror,  
And tamed thy strength, Dunluce!  
Lords of the Skerries' cruel rocks,\*  
Masters of sea and shore.  
Marauders in their clanking mail  
Ride from thy gates no more.  
Thy dungeons are untenanted.  
Thy captives are set free;  
The daisy, with sweet childish face,  
Keeps watch across the sea.  
Thy halls are open to the sky.  
Thy revelry has ceased;  
The echoes of thy mirth have died  
With fires that lit the feast.  
What keepers of thy secrets old  
Flit through the wind and rain!  
What stern-faced ghosts have come by  
night  
To visit thee again!  
Grim fortress of the Northern sea.  
Lost are thy power and pride;  
Within thy undefended walls  
The folded sheep abide.

---

### Notes

"Dunluce Castle" first appeared in *Harper's Magazine* (67:924) November 1883. The illustration is by Charles Graham (1852-1911), sketch artist, illustrator and painter. He was western illustrator for *Harper's* (1877-1892) and official artist for the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, 1893. (Source: *Who Was Who in American Art*, 1999).

View the illustration here:

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.31210014647224&view=1up&seq=954&q1=dunluce>

*Dunluce Castle*: near Ballycastle, County Antrim, in Ireland. This 14th-century castle is "situated on a rock separated from the mainland by a chasm, which is spanned by a footbridge." (Source: *Britannica Online*). Jewett visited Ireland in the summer of 1882.

*Skerries*: "A rugged insulated sea-rock or stretch of rocks, covered by the sea at high water or in stormy weather; a reef." (Source: *Oxford English Dictionary*).

An altered version of only the first 3 stanzas appeared under this title in *Verses*, 1916.

To-day upon thy ruined walls  
The flowers wave flags of truce,  
For time has proved thy conqueror,  
And tamed thy strength, Dunluce!\*

Marauders in their clanking mail  
Ride from thy gates no more,--  
Lords of the Skerries' cruel rocks,\*  
Masters of sea and shore.

Thy dungeons are untenanted,  
Thy captives are set free;  
The daisy with sweet childish face  
Keeps watch and ward o'er thee.

## A FARMER'S SORROW.

The clouds look low and heavy, as if there would be rain;  
It always means bad weather when you hear the brook so plain.  
The wet won't make much trouble now, for all the crops are in,  
And yet I somehow hate to see the long fall rains begin.

I couldn't sense the half I read, the air is close and still,  
If I were young as once I was, I'd go up on the hill.  
It isn't as it used to be when I could come and go,  
And keep upon my feet all day, now I am stiff and slow.

There's nothin' in the paper; you can take it if you choose;  
I can't make head nor tail of half they nowadays call news.  
I use to think the *Farmer*\* was head of all the rest;  
'Twas full of solid common sense; I tell you that's the best!

What does a plain, old-fashioned man care whether stocks go down?  
My stock is all four-footed! - but 'twill please the folks in town.  
Here's new machines preached every week, to help the folks that sell;  
And fashions for the women folks, and other trash as well.

'Twas readin' all this nonsense here, in winter by the fire,  
That made my boy get notions of the schools and climbin' higher.  
It used to be so snug and warm a stormy winter's night,  
With snow-clicks at the windows, and the roarin' fire for light.

But there he set, all doubled up, a-storin' this away:  
Readin' and readin' till I said 'twas more like toil than play;  
Readin' and readin' till I found he couldn't work a stroke,  
And couldn't hold the plough an hour, or hardly lift a yoke.

It stole his mind from farmin', and he run up tall and thin:  
I fought him hard enough at first, but afterward gave in.  
They got the minister to come, his mother took his part,  
Until I let them have their way, although it broke my heart.

'Twas well enough for them to talk, and I wan't going to fight;  
And then my mind got so distressed, I couldn't sleep at night.  
Folks talk of edication as if the Latin showed  
A farmer how to cast accounts or how to stack a load.

But, as I say, I had to cope with mother and with Dan,  
And then they got the minister, a good, well-meanin' man.  
And Dan, he said, must have his chance, and pretty soon I see  
The book fools and the women folks would be too much for me.

So Dan he got his schoolin', and never no complaint;  
When I give in I don't take back, but 'twould have tried a saint!  
I never knew the crops to fail as fail they did those years,  
Or money be so hard to get, and I was full of fears.

I never grumbled at his bills, but paid them one by one;  
And when the boy came home again with all his schoolin' done,  
I couldn't ask him out a-field or let him do a stroke,  
He looked just a white-skinned birch, and I felt like an oak.

But that was twenty year ago, and here we be to-day,  
And I've got old and stiff, you see, and what was once like play  
I have to hire strange folks to do, or else must let alone -  
Silas is willin', wants to work, but he's a boy half-grown.

Now, he's the kind of lad I like; his cheeks look bright and warm;  
If I could have my may, I know, I'd let him have the farm.  
Although he's but a cousin's son, he does seem near to me -  
Yes, nearer, I must say it straight - than Dan could ever be.

Dan's a professor, and they say he knows as much as most -  
But he don't know, and never will how much his learnin' cost.  
'Twas him that should have had the place; 'twas father's 'fore 'twas mine.  
I'd like to kep' it in the name; but I ain't goin' to whine.

Mother she's had it pretty hard; we needed Dan, that's true;  
And I would keep him right at home if I began life new.  
Farmin's the honest work of men; if other folks must thrive,  
Some of us ought to stay at home and keep the farms alive.

Dan's kind of disappointed - he sees he ain't the first;  
There wan't the makings of the best, and yet he ain't the worst.  
They call him a good scholar; but there's much he's learned in vain,  
If he don't think he'd farm it, if he could start again.

---

## Notes

"A Farmer's Sorrow" appeared in *The Manhattan Magazine* (3:212-3) in March 1884. This text is from that publication. If you find errors in this text or items you believe should be annotated, please contact the site manager.

*the Farmer*: Frank Luther Mott in *A History of American Magazines* (New York: Appleton, 1930), discusses a number of agricultural magazines to which the speaker of this poem might refer. *The American Farmer* (with several variations of title) published from 1819 until 1893. Thomas Green Fessenden's *The New England Farmer* may best fit the description in this poem, because it included poetry and other materials that treated subjects in addition to agriculture; however its publication series (1822-1846) ends somewhat early for this poem, which seems likely to deal with the period after the American Civil War. Another likely candidate is the successor to Fessenden's magazine, also named *The New England Farmer* (1848-1870).



## YORK GARRISON: 1640.

I

The long hill slope, the river's course,  
The high tide sleeping there --  
I see them all in sunshine soft;  
September days are fair.  
The wild birds sing in Brixham woods,  
Far off the sea waves call;  
In Scotland garrison but one  
Keeps watch and ward for all.  
One woman at her spinning stands  
There in the lookout high,  
Now glances at the woodland's edge,  
And now spins busily.  
She bends to touch the whirling wheel,  
Or mend the thread that flies,  
Then wakes from sweet day-dreams of  
home  
And seeks with eager eyes  
Her own and only little child,  
Lest she should stray too far  
From where the captain and his men  
Out in the clearing are.  
There steadily the brave men work,  
Nor sigh for what they miss;  
A memory of English farms  
Would shame a wild like this.[,]

II

All unafraid of Indian foes,  
Forgetting, every one,  
The stories told to frighten her,  
Is Polly Masterson.\*  
There, by the brook, such lovely flowers  
Have bloomed to make her glad,  
Such scarlet splendors tall and gay  
Old England never had!  
Her prim Dutch doll\* is in her arms,  
And Polly hums a tune  
To match the brook that leads her on  
This pleasant afternoon.  
The mother, busy at her wheel,  
The father at his plough,  
Forget to keep her safe in sight,  
Nor dream of dangers now.  
Yet suddenly a piercing call  
And all the work is done.  
"Come in! come in!" the watcher cries,

"Quick! to the garrison!"  
Only one word the farmers need;  
With beating hearts they climb  
The hill, and reach the open door  
And shut it just in time.  
Out from the woods the Indians steal  
Like tigers lithe and strong.  
A merciless and awful cry  
Rings out and echoes long.  
"All safe, thank God!" says Masterson,  
"Now let the siege begin--  
Our walls are strong." Then wails his wife,  
"Did you bring Polly in?"  
A sudden silence in the fort;  
A fearful hum without--  
And by the brook the scarlet flowers  
That tempted Polly out.

III

She hears the crackling of the boughs;  
Strange whispers come and go;  
Oh, Polly Masterson, run quick!  
Your little feet are slow!  
Alas, she hears the savage cry.  
Where has her father gone?  
He cannot have forgotten her,  
His Polly Masterson.  
She hurries by the scarlet flowers,  
She holds her dolly fast,  
She sees the crested, snake-like heads -  
The danger knows at last.  
The father turns away his face,  
He prays to God aloud.  
The mother stands as still as stone  
To watch the savage crowd.  
For just beyond, so short, so small,  
The breathless Polly tries  
To hurry to the fast-barred gate  
And "Father! Father!" cries!  
Who can go out? The strong men look,  
But cannot speak; they know  
That certain death is his who dares  
To meet the foes below.  
The Indians! oh the woods are full  
Of dreadful shapes of men!  
Across the open field can she  
Get safely home again?  
They see her come, the little girl.

Alas, she trips and falls!  
 Oh anxious faces looking down  
 From the stockaded walls!  
 They fear to see her captured now  
 Before their very eyes--  
 The awful march to Canada\*  
 Brings fearful memories.  
 And no one fires a gun; they stand  
 And watch the little child,  
 They hear her voice so faint and shrill,  
 They see her apron, piled  
 With posies, and her arm still holds  
 The dolly safe and fast.  
 There! there she is! The Indians see,  
 They laugh as she runs past.  
 They must not murder Polly where  
 An hour ago she played!  
 Oh will they drag her to the North  
 A wretched captive maid?

IV

What blessed mercy sudden shone  
 And covered many a sin!  
 The Indians shouted merrily  
 And Polly safe went in.  
 No tomahawks were thrown at her  
 And no one gave her chase;  
 Perhaps it touched their savage hearts --  
 That frightened little face!  
 The story seems for those dark times  
 A gleam of sunshine bright;  
 I hope they called the Indians friends  
 And gave them food that night.  
 But one thing I am sure about  
 (And then my story's done) -  
 That all the women and the men  
 Hugged Polly Masterson!

---

## Notes

This poem first appeared in *Wide Awake* (23:18-22) in June 1886, with elaborate illustrations by William Ladd Taylor. It was later reprinted in *Ballads of Romance and History* (Boston, 1887). The annotated text is followed by images of the illustrated version as it appears in the original publication.

William Ladd Taylor (1854-1926) was a popular illustrator for *The Ladies' Home Journal* and other magazines. Some of his best work is collected in *Our Home and Country* (1908). Among other Jewett works he illustrated are her story stories "Law Lane" and "Mrs. Parkins's Christmas."

View illustrations here:

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hxnzq7&view=1up&seq=19>

The following information about the historical York Garrison is from the *Michelin Guide to New England* (1993). "In 1624 the Pilgrims established a trading post at Agamenticus, the present-day site of York. The small settlement that grew up around the trading post was chosen by Sir Ferdinando Gorges, the proprietor of Maine, as the capital of his vast New World territory. In 1641, Sir Gorges gave the village a city charter and renamed it Gorgeana in his honor." Gorges's plans for the area failed, and the village was reorganized as York by the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1652. The village was several times subject to Indian attack, and was destroyed in the York or Candlemas massacre of 1692.

Jewett speaks a little of York in her historical essay, "The Old Town of Berwick," where she mentions Indian raids. However, she makes clear there that the date of this story is probably anachronistic. The Scotland Garrison almost certainly would not have had this name before 1652, when Cromwell's Scottish prisoners from the Battle of Dunbar were transported to the colonies to do forced labor. Jewett also describes the period from first settlement until 1675 in this area as characterized by peaceful interaction between Indians and settlers. Many of the details of this poem suggest that Jewett thought of it as taking place in the 1670s or after. (Research assistance, Wendy Pirsig).

"The Orchard's Grandmother" (1871), one of Jewett's stories for young readers is also set in part at a York garrison.

*Polly Masterson*: Jewett has used the name of a prominent early settler at York. Nathaniel Masterson was brought by his

parents from Holland to Plymouth, MA in 1629. Nathaniel and Elizabeth Coggsell Masterson were settled on Cider Hill, north of present-day York village by 1671, where they raised three daughters: Sarah, Abial, and Elizabeth. Nathaniel and Elizabeth were killed in the 1692 Candlemas Day Massacre. Sarah was captured in the 1692 raid and eventually redeemed; she died in a 1703 Indian raid. Abial also was captured during the 1692 raid and later redeemed (Source: Charles Edward Banks, *History of York Maine*, Vol. 1, pp. 229-30).

*Dutch doll*: A jointed wooden doll.  
(Research: Chris Butler).

*The awful march to Canada*: Probably this reference is anachronistic. When Native Americans captured English colonists, they sometimes carried them to Canada and

turned them over to the French there, but such events did not begin to take place until late in the 17th Century, as tensions grew between British and French colonies. For British colonists this increased the horror of captivity, for it would then include separation from family, the dangers to life and spirit of being in the hands of "agents of Satan" during an arduous trek through the wilderness, finally to be delivered -- if one survived -- into the hands of Papists and enemies of England. For further discussion and examples, see *Puritans among the Indians*, edited by Alden T. Vaughan and Edward W. Clark, Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1981. See also "The Old Town of Berwick," in which Jewett summarizes a story of Indian captivity from the French and Indian Wars.

## SONNET ON MEETING RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

Right here, where noisiest, narrowest is the street; [,]  
Where gaudy [flaunting] shops bedeck the crowded way;  
Where idle newsboys in vindictive play  
Dart to and fro with venturesome bare feet;  
Here, where the bulletins from fort and fleet  
Tell gaping readers what's amiss today,  
Where sin bedizens, folly makes too gay, [no comma]  
And all are victims of their own conceit;  
With these ephemeral insects of an hour  
That war [fret] and flutter, as they downward float  
In some pale sunbeam that the spring has brought,  
Where this vain world is revelling in power; [no semicolon]  
I met great Emerson, [;] serene, remote,  
Like one adventuring on seas of thought.

---

### Note

This sonnet on meeting American writer Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) appears in an undated letter to Annie Fields c. 1886-1890, and in Jewett's unpublished story, "Carlyle in America" c. 1894-1890. The text is from the letter; differences from the story text are indicated in brackets.

## A CAGED BIRD.

High at the window in her cage  
The old canary flits and sings,  
Nor sees across the curtain pass  
The shadow of a swallow's wings.

A poor deceit and copy, this  
Of larger lives that mark their span,  
Unreckoning of wider worlds  
Or gifts that Heaven keeps for man.

She gathers piteous bits and shreds,  
This solitary mateless thing,  
To patient build again the nest  
So rudely scattered spring by spring;

And sings her brief, unlistened songs,  
Her dreams of bird life wild and free,  
Yet never beats her prison bars  
At sound of song from bush or tree.

But in my busiest hours I pause,  
Held by a sense of urgent speech,  
Bewildered by that spark-like soul,  
Able my very soul to reach.

She will be heard; she chirps me loud,  
When I forget those gravest cares,  
Her small provision to supply,  
Clear water or the seedsman's wares.

She begs me now for that chief joy  
The round great world is made to grow--  
Her wisp of greenness. Hear her chide,  
Because my answering thought is slow!

What can my life seem like to her?  
A dull, unpunctual service mine;  
Stupid before her eager call,  
Her flitting steps, her insight fine.

To open wide thy prison door,  
Poor friend, would give thee to thy foes;  
And yet a plaintive note I hear,  
As if to tell how slowly goes

The time of thy long prisoning.  
Bird! does some promise keep thee  
sane?  
Will there be better days for thee?  
Will thy soul too know life again?

Ah, none of us have more than this:  
If one true friend green leaves can  
reach

From out some fairer, wider place,  
And understand our wistful speech!

---

### Notes

"A Caged Bird" first appeared in *Atlantic Monthly* (59:816-817) June 1887. It was collected in *Verses* 1916, where the text is slightly different.

### Text from Verses 1916

High at the window in her cage,  
The old canary sits and sings,  
Nor sees across the curtain pass  
The shadow of a swallow's wings.

A poor deceit and copy this  
Of larger lives that count their span,  
Unreckoning of wider worlds,  
Or gifts that Heaven keeps for man!

She gathers piteous bits and shreds,  
This solitary mateless thing,  
Patient to build again the nest  
So rudely scattered spring by spring;

And sings her brief, unheeded songs,  
Her dreams of bird-life wild and free,  
Yet never beats her prison bars  
At sound of song from bush or tree.

Yet in my busiest hours I pause,  
Held by a sense of urgent speech,  
Bewildered by that spark-like soul  
Able my very soul to reach.

She will be heard; she chirps me loud  
When I forget those gravest cares,  
Her small provision to supply--  
Clear water or the seedsman's wares.

She begs me now for that chief joy  
The round great world is made to grow--  
Her wisp of greenness. Hear her chide  
Because my answering thought is slow!

What can my life seem like to her?  
A dull, unpunctual service mine,  
Stupid before her eager speech,  
Her flitting steps, her insight fine!

To open wide thy prison door,  
Poor friend, would give thee to thy foes;  
And yet a plaintive note I hear,  
As if to tell how slowly goes

The time of thy long prisoning.  
Bird! does some promise keep thee sane?  
Will there be better days for thee?  
Will thy soul too know life again?

Ah, none of us have more than this--  
If one true friend green leaves can reach  
From out some fairer, wider place,  
And understand our wistful speech!

## ON NEW YEAR'S EVE IN THE MORNING.

On New Year's Eve in the morning,  
My dear, I thought of you,  
And I said, I have no better gift  
Than a friend so dear and true;  
A love that is mine to the end of time,  
And will last my whole life through.

---

### Notes

This untitled poem appeared in *The Modern Priscilla* 1:2 (January 1888), p. 4. It was found there and made available by M. Leigh Martin.

*MODERN PRISCILLA* (1887-1930) appeared first in newspaper format and was devoted to fancy work, dress patterns, china painting, and needlework. Published first in Lynn, MA, it moved to Boston in 1894, and in later years changed names and content several times.

This issue was edited by F. Beulah Kellogg and Frank Spencer Guild. Little information is currently available about Kellogg; Martin points out this pseudonym was used by Isaiah Clarkson Parrott, who later was listed as the magazine's editor. The later revelation of the man posing as a woman caused consternation among readers. Guild (1856-1929) was a well-known painter, illustrator and writer. He became art director of *The Ladies' Home Journal*.

Wikipedia says:

"Priscilla and Aquila were a first century Christian missionary married couple described in the New Testament and traditionally listed among the Seventy Disciples. They lived, worked, and traveled with the Apostle Paul, who described them as his "fellow workers in Christ Jesus" (Romans 16:3)"

Acts 18:2-3 in the Bible reads:

And found a certain Jew named "Aquila", born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife "Priscilla"; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

## A CHILD'S GRAVE.

More than a hundred years ago  
They raised for her this little stone;  
"Miss Polly Townsend, aged nine,"  
Under the grass lies here alone.

'T was hard to leave your merry Notes  
For ranks of angels, robed and crowned,  
To sleep until the Judgment Day  
In Copp's Hill burying-ground.

You must have dreaded heaven then,--  
A solemn doom of endless rest,  
Where white-winged seraphs tuned their  
harps--  
You surely liked this life the best!

The gray slate head-stones frightened you,  
When from Christ Church your father  
brought  
You here on Sunday afternoon,  
And told you that this world was nought;

And you spelled out the carven names  
Of people, who, beneath the sod,  
Hidden away from mortal eyes,  
Were at the mercy of their God.

You had been taught that He was great,  
And only hoped He might be good.--  
An awful thought that you must join  
This silent neighborhood!

No one remembers now the day  
They buried you on Copp's Hill-side;  
No one remembers you, or grieves  
Or misses you because you died.

I see the grave and reverend men  
And pious women, meek and mild,  
Walk two by two in company,  
The mourners for this little child.

The harbor glistened in the sun,  
The bell in Christ Church steeple tolled,  
And all the playmates cried for her,  
Miss Polly Townsend, nine years old.

### Notes

"A Child's Grave" is first known to have appeared in an anthology, *The Poets of Maine*, compiled by George Bancroft Griffith (Portland, ME: Elwell, Pickard & Co., 1888, pp.742-3). Weber & Weber in *A Bibliography of the Published Writings of Sarah Orne Jewett* (p. 25) indicate that this poem was "For L. A.," Lillian Aldrich. Lillian Aldrich and her husband, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, were close friends of Jewett and of Annie Fields, traveling and spending summers together.

*judgment day*: see Revelations 20:11-14.



Text from *Verses* 1916

More than a hundred years ago  
They raised for her this little stone;  
"Miss Polly Townsend, aged nine,"  
It says, is sleeping here alone.

'T was hard to leave your merry mates  
For ranks of angels robed and crowned,  
To sleep until the judgment day\*  
In Copp's Hill burying-ground.

You must have dreaded heaven then--  
A solemn doom of endless rest,  
Where white-winged seraphs tuned their  
harps--  
You surely liked this life the best!

The gray slate headstones frightened you,  
When from Christ Church your father  
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You here on Sunday afternoon,  
And told you that this world was nought;

And you spelled out the carven names  
Of people who beneath the sod,  
Hidden away from mortal eyes,

Were at the mercy of their God.

You had been taught that He was great--  
You only hoped He might be good--  
An awful thought that you must join  
This silent neighborhood!

Did you grow up to womanhood  
In Heaven, and did you soon lose sight,  
Because you are so happy there,  
Of this world's troubles infinite?

No one remembers now the day  
They buried you on Copp's Hill-side;  
No one remembers you, or grieves  
And misses you, because you died.

I see the grave and serious men  
And pious women, meek and mild,  
Walk two by two in company,  
The mourners for this little child.

The harbor glistened in the sun;  
The bell in Christ Church steeple tolled;  
And all her playmates cried for her--  
Miss Polly Townsend, nine years old.

## WAITING AT FOURSCORE.

My life seems like a book that's read and put up on the shelf;  
I used to be a hurrying round; I don't feel like myself;  
Sometimes I'm tired of keeping still. I want to be at work;  
I see so many things to do and I don't like to shirk.

I used to have to toil and plan, and now I have to wait,  
And I suppose I mustn't fret, but in a future state  
I shall be sure to find my place and be some use again,  
For there we still shall serve the Lord\* -- the Scripture says it plain.

So it's my golden wedding day, though we have been apart  
For fifty years, and yet John knows that he has kept my heart,  
And I know that he looks for me and waits for me to come;  
I've tried to do the best I could -- and here or there it's home.

---

### Notes

"Waiting at Fourscore" appeared in *The American Advocate of Peace and Arbitration* (53,4: 97) May 1891.

*serve the Lord*: While the value of serving God is spoken of frequently in the Bible, few examples specify how such service continues after one's death. Perhaps the speaker is thinking of Matthew 25:21, in the "parable of the talents," where the "good and faithful" servants become more responsible in a new fellowship with "the master."

## O LITTLE PAINS! MES PETITE BREADS!

O little pains! Mes petite breads!  
I break with joy your crisp young heads  
In you no dreadful soda lurks  
To stab me with a thousand dirks.  
Some baker immigrant should bring  
You to my New World suffering.

---

### Notes

This verse appears in a letter to Mrs. George D. Howe in Fields, Letters, dated at Chailly, 9 July, 1892.

## A WILD ROSE.

A blushing wild pink rose.  
By tangled woods and ways,  
A passing sweet that goes  
With summer days.

From rosy dawn till night  
Wafted from east to west.  
Kissed by the morning light  
To evening rest.

Thy odors faint outlive  
Alike both joy and pain.  
Stealing the sweet they give  
To yield again.

Leaving a faint perfume  
Thy memory to fulfill.  
Forgotten in thy bloom,  
Remembered still.

---

### Note

"A Wild Rose" appeared in the *Chicago Times-Herald*, September 7, 1895, p. 6.

## THE GLOUCESTER MOTHER.

WHEN Autumn winds are high  
They wake and trouble me,  
With thoughts of people lost  
A-coming on the coast,  
And all the ships at sea.

How dark, how dark and cold,  
And fearful in the waves,  
Are tired folk who lie not still  
And quiet in their graves: --  
In moving waters deep,  
That will not let men sleep  
As they may sleep on any hill;  
May sleep ashore till time is old,  
And all the earth is frosty cold. --  
Under the flowers a thousand springs  
They sleep and dream of many things.

God bless them all who die at sea!  
If they must sleep in restless waves,  
God make them dream they are ashore,  
With grass above their graves.

---

### Notes

"The Gloucester Mother" appeared in *McClure's* magazine (31:702) in October 1908. This text is from that printing.

The poem was reprinted in Jewett's posthumous *Verses* (1916). After the graphic representations is the text from *Verses*, in which most end-of-line punctuation and one word [ hills for hill ] are changed.

The poem also appeared in the New York *Times Saturday Review of Books*, October 17, 1908, p. 1, with slight textual variations.

WHEN Autumn winds are high  
They wake and trouble me,  
With thoughts of people lost  
A-coming on the coast,  
And all the ships at sea.

How dark, how dark and cold,  
And fearful in the waves,  
Are tired folk who lie not still  
And quiet in their graves;  
In moving waters deep  
That will not let men sleep  
As they may sleep on any hill;  
May sleep ashore till time is old,  
And all the earth is frosty cold.  
Under the flowers a thousand springs  
They sleep and dream of many things.

God bless them all who die at sea!  
If they must sleep in restless waves,  
God make them dream they are ashore,  
With grass above their graves.

From McClure's Magazine for October.

Version from *Verses*, 1916

WHEN autumn winds are high,  
They wake and trouble me  
With thoughts of people lost  
A-coming on the coast,  
And all the ships at sea.

How dark, how dark and cold  
And fearful in the waves,  
Are tired folk who lie not still  
And quiet in their graves  
In moving waters deep  
That will not let men sleep  
As they may sleep on any hills,  
May sleep ashore till time is old  
And all the earth is frosty cold.  
Under the flowers a thousand springs  
They sleep and dream of many things.

God bless them all who die at sea!  
If they must sleep in restless waves,  
God make them dream they are ashore  
With grass above their graves!

A signed copy of "The Gloucester Mother" in Jewett's handwriting as it appeared in Annie Fields, editor, *Letters of Sarah Orne Jewett*, 1911, p. 91. This copy has several punctuation differences from the other texts presented here.

## In Gloucester.

When autumn winds are high  
They wake and trouble me  
With thoughts of people lost  
A-coming on the coast;  
And all the ships at sea

How dark, how dark and cold  
And fearful in the waves  
Are tired folk who lie not still  
and quiet in their graves:-  
In moving waters deep  
That will not let men sleep,  
as they may sleep on any hill;  
May sleep ashore till time is old  
And all the earth is frosty cold,  
Under the flowers a thousand Springs  
They sleep and dream of many things.

God bless them all who die at sea!-  
If they must sleep in restless waves  
God, make them dream they are ashore,  
With grass above their graves.

=

Sarah O. Jewett

## TO MY FATHER.

I

When in the quiet house I sat alone,  
Sometimes I heard your footfall drawing  
    near;  
And with a thrill of gladness open wide  
I flung my door to bid you welcome, dear.  
Sometimes you did not even speak to me,  
But left me quickly when our eyes had met  
And you had kissed me -- ah, how tenderly!  
Light were the tasks the busy day had set;  
I had grown braver for the sight of you;  
Out of your sight I was not left alone.  
A thousand times across the land and sea  
Your loving thoughts straight to my heart  
    have flown,  
Returned from that far country of the stars.  
Again you find me in the quiet room,--  
Your angelhood has lent your love fleet  
    wings  
To make the journey through the evening's  
    gloom.  
How can I miss you, though the days are  
    long  
And dark with sorrow since I saw you die,  
Though like a dream my changed life seems  
    to me,  
With all its pleasures stolen suddenly?  
Who is so alive as he the world calls dead!  
What heart so loving as the heart that waits,  
Not cold and still, but quick with tenderness!  
No other hand will lead me through the  
    gates.  
Your great sweet love is ever close to me  
To bring me courage, and my soul to keep.  
Heaven's peace you bring who ever brought  
    me earth's,  
And some fair day I too shall fall on sleep.

## TO MY FATHER

II

I heard to-day the first sweet song of spring  
    --  
A blue-bird's eager note, so faint and far,  
Across the fields; and first I was so glad.  
I thought of summer, and the flowers that  
    are  
Waiting for that glad day when they can  
    bloom.  
But quick again my heart was sorrowing:  
It was mistaken in its winter's end.  
I think I never was so grieved and sad,  
And in my mind there was no longer room  
For any thought but of that dearest friend  
Who taught me first the beauty of these  
    days--  
To watch the young leaves start, the birds  
    return,  
And how the brooks rush down their rocky  
    ways,  
The new life everywhere, the stars that burn  
Bright in the mild, clear nights. Oh! he has  
    gone,  
And I must watch the spring this year,  
    alone.

---

### Note

Theodore Jewett, Jewett's father, died on  
20 September, 1878.

## TOP OF THE HILL.

Green slope of autumn fields,  
And soft November sun,  
And golden leaves--they linger yet,  
While tasselled pines new fragrance get,  
Though summer-time is done.

The hedge-rows wear a veil  
Of glistening spider threads,  
And in the trees along the brook  
The clematis,\* like whiffs of smoke,  
Its faded garland spreads.

See, here upon my hand,  
This gauzy-winged wild bee!  
Now that the winds are laid,  
He suns him unafraid  
Of winter-time or me.

I love the steepled town,  
The river winding down,  
The slow salt tide that creeps  
Beside a shore that sleeps,  
Dark with its pine woods' crown.\*

Here, high above them all  
Upon my broad-backed hill,  
Far from shrill voices I,  
And near the sun and sky,  
Can look and take my fill.

I breathe the sweet air in,  
While lower drops the sun,  
And brighter all too soon  
Grows the pale hunter's moon,  
The whole year's fairest one.

Oh, lovely light that fades  
Too soon from sky and field,  
Oh, days that are too few,  
How can I gather you,  
Or treasure what you yield!

Oh, sunshine, warm me through,  
And, soft wind, blow away  
My foolishness, my fears,  
And let some golden years  
Grow from this golden day!

---

### Notes

"Top of the Hill" first appeared in *Verses* 1916.

*clematis*: "A genus of twining shrubs (N.O. *Ranunculaceæ*), having flowers with a showy calyx and no corolla, and seed-vessels adorned with long feathery appendages." (Source: *Oxford English Dictionary*).

*pine woods' crown*: Jewett describes the area around her home town of South Berwick, Maine. See "The Old Town of Berwick" as well as "River Driftwood" and other sketches in *Country By-Ways* for other descriptions and further information.



## THE WIDOWS' HOUSE.

[ AT BETHLEHEM, PENNSYLVANIA ]

What of this house with massive walls  
And small-paned windows, gay with  
blooms?  
A quaint and ancient aspect falls  
Like pallid sunshine through the rooms.  
Not this new country's rush and haste  
Could breed, one thinks, so still a life;  
Here is the old Moravian\* home,  
A placid foe of worldly strife.  
For this roof covers, night and day,  
The widowed women poor and old,  
The mated without mates, who say  
Their light is out, their story told.  
To these the many mansions\* seem  
Dear household fires that cannot die;  
They wait through separation dark  
An endless union by and by.  
Each window has its watcher wan  
To fit the autumn afternoon,  
The dropping poplar leaves, the dream  
Of spring that faded all too soon.  
Upon the highest window-ledge  
A glowing scarlet flower shines down.  
Oh, wistful sisterhood, whose home  
Has sanctified this quiet town!  
Oh, hapless household, gather in  
The tired-hearted and the lone!  
What broken homes, what sundered love,  
What disappointment you have known!  
They count their little wealth of hope  
And spend their waiting days in peace,  
What comfort their poor loneliness  
Must find in every soul's release!  
And when the wailing trombones go  
Along the street before the dead  
In that Moravian custom quaint,  
They smile because a soul has fled.

---

### Notes

*Moravian*: "A member or adherent of the 'Unity of Moravian brethren', a Protestant sect, founded early in the 18th c. in Saxony by emigrants from Moravia, and continuing the tradition of the *Unitas Fratrum*, a body holding Hussite doctrines, which had its chief seat in Moravia and Bohemia.

"The virtual founder of the body was Count Zinzendorf, who was the patron of the Moravian refugees, and embraced their doctrines. The Moravians early obtained many adherents in England and the American colonies." There was a Moravian congregation in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in the nineteenth century. (Source: *Oxford English Dictionary*).

*many mansions*: See John 14:2.

## THE FALLEN OAK.

Where the oak fell, a great road leads away,  
Across the country to the door of day,  
To find no ending where the sky begins:--  
What the oak knew our larger outlook wins.

---

### **Note**

"The Fallen Oak" first appeared in *Verses* 1916.

**Unpublished Manuscripts  
and an Authorship Puzzle**

## THE DAISIES.

15 January 1871

When the good year is old,  
And somewhat weary,  
Yet has enough of gold  
To keep him cheery --  
When Earth, clad in her best,  
Sits by her neighbor  
The Sun, and has a rest  
From Summer labor --  
When prudent skies [amaze]  
The North in hazes  
There comes the holiday  
Of all the daisies.

-----

They are the folk that won  
September's graces.  
And charmed the jovial sun  
With their bright faces.  
He let them linger late;  
When they grew sober  
He gave them leave to wait  
And see October;  
For all the quiet land  
(Ere days were duller)  
Would haste to make it grant  
With dear bright color.

-----

Lo all in fields and towns,  
And each new comer  
Dressed in old fashioned gowns  
The move in Summer  
Stay yet awhile, behind

Blooms that were stronger  
And play with sun and wind  
A little longer.  
Still happy still alert,  
Still [*not readable* -- *perhaps*: memry heart  
see] --  
[Dropped / Dappled] from September's  
[skin]  
When she departed

-----

Till winter comes so near  
His shadow chills them,  
And they lose half the cheer  
September [wills] them  
Till their old friend the sun  
Becomes forgetful.  
And Autumn has begun  
To grow regretful;  
Then they [make] haste to hide  
Their altered faces.  
And lie down side by side  
In grassy places.

---

### Note

Transcribed from MS Am 1745.24 (24) held  
by the Houghton Library, Harvard  
University. Notes and guesses at  
unreadable words appear in [ brackets.]

## ALL IN THE WINTER WEATHER.

All in the winter weather  
I found my flowers in bloom.  
How could they miss the summer sun  
with firelight in the room!

A tall white lily [in the corner ?],  
You in the twilight stand.  
And I can touch the dear bright roses  
Beside you, with my hand.

---

### Notes

Notes and guesses at unreadable words appear in [ brackets].

This poem so far is known only in a manuscript held by an unknown private owner. The manuscript appears clearly to be in Jewett's handwriting. It is a fair copy, presumably meant for a gift presentation, and Jewett has signed it. It is illustrated with an image of two red roses at the top of the page. I have not seen color work by Jewett of this kind. In the scanned copy of the ms. I was able to examine, the medium of the image is not clear. Is it a color printed page for writing fair copies as gifts? Is it a unique piece of painting in oil or watercolor? While it is possible the image was made by Jewett, this seems unlikely, as the roses are more realistic than her typically impressionistic style of watercolor.

One might reasonably guess that the poem is addressed to Annie Fields, though Jewett was close to others to whom the poem might be addressed. The lack of a date further complicates speculation about the poem's occasion.

## ISLES TO EAST AND ISLES TO WEST ARE.

Isles to east and isles to west are;  
You were wise, my Lord Sylvester  
Since you felt a love for Shelter  
when you saw\* its wooded shore, --  
All your money might be spent  
But the kindness you meant,  
And the friendliness you gave,  
All your trees\* and pastures gave;  
Still the manor-door stands wide  
And your children still abide.  
Treasure you have left behind you  
Generous and kind I find you.\*

Once in sunshine, once in rain  
Proved I true these verses vain.

Sarah O. Jewett

Shelter Island\*  
13 September 1884

---

### Notes

*Since*: Jewett revised this line from "If you felt a love for shelter".

*saw*: Jewett underlined this word twice.

*trees*: Jewett has corrected this word.

*and*: This word is underlined twice.

*you*: Jewett has drawn a short double line between this line and the next, perhaps intending to set off the final couplet.

*Shelter Island*: In September of 1884, Jewett and Annie Adams Fields visited Professor Eben Norton Horsford and his family at their home, the Sylvester Manor on Shelter Island, off the eastern coast of Long Island, NY. During the previous July, Horsford held a celebration and dedication of a monument to memorialize the time when persecuted Quakers exiled from Massachusetts found refuge at Shelter Island.

The manuscript of this poem is held by the Fales Library and Special Collections, Elmer Holmes Bobst Library, New York University. Sylvester Manor Archive 1649-1996, MSS.208, Box 114: Folder 24, "Poem by Sarah Orne Jewett About Shelter Island," [Signed].

## SHALL I EVER TIRE OF YOUR KISSES?

Shall I ever tire of your kisses?  
I asked myself to-day  
When your arms had been around me  
And you had gone away

Will the pine-tree tire of the wind that blows  
Through its branches from the sea  
And stirs within it its bravest life  
As you do mine in me?

Will the flower that the storm has beaten  
Be tired of the summer sun  
That shines out clear and bright and warm  
After the rain is done?

Oh no, my love, my darling  
You always grow more dear  
Our hearts are one heart always now  
And I need never fear.

---

### Note

The manuscript of this poem is held by the Houghton Library of Harvard University, MS Am 1745.24, item 104.

## TO A MANDOLIN.

Where are the young musicians  
Who touched thy silver strings?  
The best of them are angels  
Who stand with folded wings --  
Sweet harpers in the heavenly choirs  
Released from Earthly things.

But do their fancies never  
Stray back to Earth again?  
And do they never smile and dream  
Of thy sweet ringing strain?  
Some echoes of the old time Songs  
Must have been slow to wane!

And do their ghosts to Italy  
In summer nights flit down  
To linger near the balconies  
Among the shadows brown;  
And strike the plaintive chords again  
Within the sleeping town?

---

### Notes

A fair copy manuscript of this poem is held by the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA. Transcription and annotation by Terry Heller, Coe College. Whether this copy is in Jewett's hand is not yet known.

Shana McKenna, Archivist at the Gardner museum, notes that the Morgan Library & Museum holds a signed manuscript of this poem, annotated by M. A. De Wolfe Howe page [4], editor of Jewett's posthumous *Verses* 1916: "These verses sent me by Miss Mary Jewett, came to light too late for inclusion in the collection."



## WHY DO I LOVE YOU?

Why do I love you? If I told you why  
Then you would know the secret that was made  
The law that Love has from all time obeyed,  
And I should understand a mystery.  
From the four corners of the earth have I  
Gathered into my heart, all unafraid  
The friendships that are mine. This price I paid:  
I gave myself for them most willingly.  
The life in me a part of all Life is!  
One great power moves the whole world on its way;  
When I am happiest is when I find  
The next of kin to me in hills or seas  
Or trees that grow, or flowers that bloom in May  
Or you dear love my friend so true and kind.

---

### Note

This sonnet is from an MS in the Louise Chandler Moulton papers (Library of Congress), quoted in John E. Frost's *Sarah Orne Jewett*, p. 116.

## An Authorship Puzzle

Did Jewett write this anonymous poem?

### FRIENDSHIP.

How slender is the cord that binds  
In friendship sympathizing minds\*  
    In this cold world below,  
Yet, gently touched, unworn 't will last  
    Until life's earthly day is passed,  
And still will stronger grow.

But our cold breath will sometimes make  
The strongest friendship sever, break,  
    When gales could have no power.  
Tis not the storms of pelting rain  
That casts the mildew on the grain,  
    But misty clouds that lower.

The massive iron rent in two,  
Still may be joined as strong as new,  
    Yes, just the very same;  
But friendship shattered, never more  
Can be the same as 'twas before,  
    Altho' it bear the name.

When one leaf's withered on the flower,  
Is lost to us its primal power,  
    However balmy sweet.  
We value not the faded rose,  
No joy to us it e'er bestows,  
    But cast it at our feet.

Yet, did each blossom, fresh and fair,  
    Remain in all its fragrance there,

No power but death could sever.  
The more the storm that flower should  
wring,  
The closer to it should we cling,  
    Nor leave it friendless, never.

---

### Notes

"Friendship" appeared in *The Cornucopia*, published for the Strawberry Festival and Fair of the Congregational Church, South Berwick, ME., June 22, 1871. The poem was published anonymously. Some readers believe Jewett to be the author, but this has not been confirmed. The text is available courtesy of the Old Berwick Historical Society.

In her letter to Miss Bridgman of 2 January 1885, Jewett says she published some verses in a weekly paper when she was as young as 14.

*slender is the cord*: Possibly an allusion to Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. Research: Laura Crow.