

**ACTAEON'S
DEFENSE AND
OTHER POEMS**

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Actaeon's Defense and Other Poems by Alice Wilson

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ALICE WILSON

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Actæon's Defense

and Other Poems by

Alice Wilson



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CONTENTS

	PAGE
<i>Actaon's Defense</i>	7
<i>To a Pine Tree at Night</i>	11
<i>Voice and Star</i>	13
<i>To Iphigenia</i>	14
<i>St. Agnes' Dreams</i>	17
<i>Voices</i>	19
<i>Choice</i>	21
<i>To the Queen Dying</i>	23
<i>Thoughts on Watching a Snow-Storm</i>	24
<i>To a Scarlet Tanager</i>	26
<i>Rhapsody</i>	27
<i>Vision</i>	30
<i>To N. W. and A. E. W.</i>	31
<i>To M. L. D.</i>	32
<i>To a Lovely Woman</i>	33
<i>Wartburg Castle *</i>	34
<i>Wartburg Casile **</i>	35
<i>Wartburg Casile ***</i>	36
<i>To Egypt</i>	37
<i>Villa Muti</i>	38
<i>Remembrance</i>	39

530

	PAGE
<i>May Song</i>	39
<i>Rhythm</i>	40
<i>Peace</i>	41
<i>Dawn and Daphne</i>	42
<i>Sovereign Spring</i>	43
<i>New Year's Day</i>	44
<i>Camoen's Cry</i>	45
<i>Moon Maid</i>	46
<i>The Minstrel</i>	48
<i>Grief in May</i>	49
<i>Winter Marches</i>	50
<i>Love Sonnets and Lyrics</i>	
<i>I</i>	52
<i>II</i>	53
<i>III</i>	54
<i>IV</i>	55
<i>V</i>	56
<i>VI</i>	57
<i>VII</i>	58
<i>VIII</i>	59
<i>IX</i>	60
<i>X</i>	61

	PAGE
<i>To the Dream-Beloved</i>	62
<i>On a Portrait</i>	64
<i>Evening Reverie</i>	65
<i>Sea-Bird</i>	66
<i>Song</i>	67
<i>Hopes</i>	68
<i>Song</i>	69
<i>Expectancy</i>	70
<i>If thou didst come</i>	71
<i>Comparison</i>	72
<i>Little New Moon</i>	73
<i>Jealousy</i>	74
<i>Plaint</i>	75
<i>Blossoms</i>	76
<i>Winter Glow</i>	77
<i>The Norse Spirit</i>	78
<i>To a Statue: Madonna and Child</i>	87
<i>Art</i>	90

ACTÆON'S DEFENSE

- " Nay, thou wilt hear me, dazzling Artemis?
" Stay but a while, my goddess! stay and hear!
" Surely thou know'st no wilful passion drove
" Me in desire to this sight of thee?
" Not more than some unthinking sheep that sees
" The rim of pasture greener o'er the ridge
" And goes impelled by instinct to the best,
" Came I upon thee in thy mystery.
" Thou know'st my happy life; how with the
 youths
" I chased and sported, sang, and wore the wreaths
" The maidens wove, with careless victory?
" Count them, these years! Were they not fault-
 lessly
" Thine own, oh Maiden Huntress? fit to adorn
" The marble of thy temple with a frieze
" Of carven scenes whereon thy tameless gaze
" Might rest in exultation?
 " Thus I lived,
" 'Til once — whether a world of seasons past —
" One autumn,— nay, or whether one brief morn,
" I know not! — suddenly my horn fell dumb.
" I answered not my friends, nor stirred — and all
" The chase died out in echo. Still I stood,

" Hushed by a dream and blind. And as a vase
" Of alabaster shows the glowing flame
" So burned the dream within me. Ah! no more
" The same, but now as one apart
" Who feels a farther wonder than he sees,
" I wandered, and my feet came carelessly
" Unto the door of Spring.

" Yea, ever fair
" This birth beneath the sod, that wakens death
" To life, and bids the buried roots to break
" Into a coronal of budding things;—
" That bids the waters woo the empyrean blue
" To mate with them, and lie in lakes and streams
" Like sleeping Godhood veiled in loveliness;—
" That decks the morning hills with dew-fed
 beauty
" And sends a thousand sparkling points of light
" To jewel all the morning!

" So adown
" Unending vistas trembling into green
" Where scarcely yet the tender thought of nest
" Had entered, or the stillness broken yet
" With earliest song, and over virgin fields
" That lay yet wrapped in lovely harvest dreams,
" Under the young trees' arches, past the glades,
" I came. And oft when lying by a pool

