

**THE POET, THE
FOOL AND
THE FAERIES**

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The poet, the fool and the faeries by Madison Cawein

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MADISON CAWEIN

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"Following his own star, Mr. Cawein has created a type of nature poetry wholly distinct in that, to an observation so minute and delicate that it might serve as the equipment of a naturalist, he has united a fancy so rich and versatile that one finds the fact transforming under his eyes to a strange beauty and yet losing none of its reality. Indeed it is the sense of reality in Mr. Cawein's work, the minuteness with which he records what might escape a less devoted observer, that constitutes the supreme charm of his work. That Wordsworth should have celebrated the 'Small Celandine' was in its day an epoch in nature observation, but one might explore the Kentucky woods and fields with a volume of Cawein's poems as a handbook and identify many as lowly and exquisite a flower first recognized in song.

"With something of Thoreau's mood Mr. Cawein finds in Kentucky mead and coppice the outer world in microcosm and does not wander far afield in quest of other expressions of a beauty he has not yet exhausted. Year by year the passing pageant, bringing some new wonder, finds him still intent, with no day barren of its revelation or devoid of its joy.

"This last is perhaps the quality which enforces itself most strongly upon Mr. Cawein's readers, that no sense of disillusion ever creeps into his work when nature is his theme, though not absent from it now and then when man obtrudes in the picture.

"Mr. Cawein is primarily a painter, a painter like Manet, who delighted to depict in different atmospheres the same subject, revealing the beauty of its transformations. Always the veritable color and aroma, the palpable sense of the open is transferred to his pages, so that one feels the direct impulse which inspired them." . . .

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TO
ALICE MONROE PAPE

GIFTED AND BEAUTIFUL

SHE DIED YOUNG

*The leaves are fading ; and on sea and shore
An autumn sadness falls : the world grows wan ;
And through the dusk the wind sweeps wearily on,
Sighing for Summer days that are no more.
We three, who once were four, — ah, happy four ! —
Our narrow circle round the hearth have drawn,
A ring, from which the queenliest gem is gone,
Whose empty setting nothing will restore.
Oh, unbelievable ! that never again
Shall that bright presence fill the house with light !
Like a fair taper, burning silver clear :
Whose fire is ashes now, — but not in vain,
Since here it shone for us, and through the night
Would guide us, shining, to some higher sphere.*

*Manchester-by-the-Sea, Mass.
September, 1911*

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