

**DREAMS AND IMAGES;
AN ANTHOLOGY OF
CATHOLIC POETS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649565375

Dreams and Images; An Anthology of Catholic Poets by Joyce Kilmer

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TORONTO
THE MUSSON BOOK COMPANY
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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

For advice and assistance in collecting and arranging these poems, I am grateful to many friends, especially to Mr. T. R. Smith, Miss Caroline Giltinan and Mr. John Bunker. The publishers, editors and authors who have kindly consented to let me use copyright material are numerous and I assure them of my deep sense of obligation. In particular I desire to thank the following publishers for their generous permission to use all that I required from their lists: Charles Scribner's Sons, John Lane Company, Small, Maynard Company, P. J. Kennedy Sons, Frederick A. Stokes Company, *The Catholic World*, Houghton, Mifflin Company, The Encyclopaedia Press, Henry Holt & Company, The Devin-Adair Company, Little, Brown & Company, The Macmillan Company, Elkin Mathews, *The Ave Maria*, Laurence Gomme, and Wilfrid Meynell.

J. K.

To
REV. JAMES J. DALY, S.J.

INTRODUCTION

THIS is not a collection of devotional poems. It is not an attempt to rival Orby Shipley's admirable "Carmina Mariana" or any other similar anthology. What I have tried to do is to bring together the poems in English that I like best that were written by Catholics since the middle of the Nineteenth Century. There are in this book poems religious in theme; there are also love-songs and war-songs. But I think that it may be called a book of Catholic poems. For a Catholic is not a Catholic only when he prays; he is a Catholic in all the thoughts and actions of his life. And when a Catholic attempts to reflect in words some of the Beauty of which as a poet he is conscious, he cannot be far from prayer and adoration.

The Church has never been without her great poets. And in the Nineteenth Century there was a splendid renaissance of Catholic poetry written in English. It had already begun when Francis Thompson wrote his *Essay on Shelley*, in which he longed for the by-gone days when poetry was "the lesser sister and helpmate of the Church; the minister to the mind, as the Church to the soul." The members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood were not Catholics, but their movement was related to the renaissance of Catholic poetry—it was an attempt to restore to art and letters some

of the glory of the days before what is called the Reformation. Coventry Patmore carried the theories of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood to their logical conclusion, as Newman did those of the Tractarians. Coventry Patmore became a Catholic, and found in his Faith his inspiration and his theme. And his disciple Francis Thompson, born to the Faith which Patmore reached by way of the divine adventure of conversion, with art even greater than that of his master, made of the language of Protestant England an instrument of Catholic adoration.

A few of the poets represented in this book were not yet Catholics when they wrote the poems I have quoted. But I do not think that anyone will find fault with me for including Newman and Hawker among the Catholic poets. I am very sorry that the limitations of space have made me exclude many poems dear to me, many poems that are part of the world's literary heritage. There should be many Catholic anthologies.

The poet sees things hidden from other men, but he sees them only in dreams. A poet is (by the very origin of the word) a maker, but a maker of images, not a creator of life. This is a book of reflections of the Beauty which mortal eyes can see only in reflection, a book of dreams of that Truth which one day we shall waking understand. A book of images it is, too, containing representations carved by those who worked by the aid of memory, the strange memory of men living in Faith.

JOYCE KILMER.

August, 1917.

165th Regiment, Camp Mills, Mineola, New York.

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