

**THE WRITINGS OF JAMES
RUSSELL LOWELL, IN TEN
VOLUMES, VOL. X:
POEMS, IV**

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The writings of James Russell Lowell, in ten volumes, Vol. X: Poems, IV by James Russell Lowell

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JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

**THE WRITINGS OF JAMES
RUSSELL LOWELL, IN TEN
VOLUMES, VOL. X:
POEMS, IV**

POEMS

IV.

BY

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL



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CONTENTS

MAIN

	PAGE
POEMS OF THE WAR.	
-THE WASHERS OF THE SHROUD	1
TWO SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF BLONDEL	6
MEMORIE POSITUM	10
ON BOARD THE '76	14
ODE RECITED AT THE HARVARD COMMEMORATION	17
L'ENVOI	32
THE CATHEDRAL	37
THREE MEMORIAL POEMS.	
- ODE READ AT THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIGHT AT CONCORD BRIDGE	65
- UNDER THE OLD ELM	74
AN ODE FOR THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1876	89
HEARTSEASE AND RUE.	
AGASSIZ	101
+ TO HOLMES, ON HIS SEVENTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY	120
IN A COPY OF OMAR KHAYYÁM	123
ON RECEIVING A COPY OF MR. AUSTIN DOBSON'S "OLD WORLD IDYLLS"	123
TO C. F. BRADFORD	125
BANKSIDE	127
JOSEPH WINLOCK	129
SONNET, TO FANNY ALEXANDER	130
JEFFRIES WYMAN	130
TO A FRIEND	131
WITH AN ARMCHAIR	132
E. G. DE R.	133
BON VOYAGE!	133
TO WHITTIER, ON HIS SEVENTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY	134
ON AN AUTUMN SKETCH OF H. G. WILD	135

TO MISS D. T.	135
WITH A COPY OF AUCASSIN AND NICOLETE	136
ON PLANTING A TREE AT INVERARAY	137
AN EPISTLE TO GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS	138
SENTIMENT.	
ENDYMION	148
THE BLACK PREACHER	156
ARCADIA REDIVIVA	159
THE NEST	163
A YOUTHFUL EXPERIMENT IN ENGLISH HEXAMETERS	165
BIRTHDAY VERSES	166
ESTRANGEMENT	167
PHOEBE	168
DAS EWIG-WEIBLICHE	170
THE RECALL	171
ABSENCE	172
MONNA LISA	172
THE OPTIMIST	173
ON BURNING SOME OLD LETTERS	174
THE PROTEST	177
THE PETITION	177
FACT OR FANCY?	178
AGRO-DOLCE	179
THE BROKEN TRYST	180
CASA SIN ALMA	180
A CHRISTMAS CAROL	181
MY PORTRAIT GALLERY	182
PAOLO TO FRANCESCA	183
SONNET, SCOTTISH BORDER	183
SONNET, ON BEING ASKED FOR AN AUTOGRAPH IN VENICE	184
THE DANCING BEAR	184
THE MAPLE	185
NIGHTWATCHES	186
DEATH OF QUEEN MERCEDES	186
PRISON OF CERVANTES	187
TO A LADY PLAYING ON THE CITHERN	187
THE EYE'S TREASURY	188
PESSIMOPTIMISM	189
THE BLAKES	189
A FOREBODING	190

CONTENTS

vii

FANCY.

UNDER THE OCTOBER MAPLES	191
LOVE'S CLOCK	192
X ELEANOR MAKES MACAROONS	193
TELEPATHY	195
♣ SCHERZO	196
"FRANCISCUS DE VERULAMIO SIC COGITAVIT"	197
♣ AUSPEX	198
THE PREGNANT COMMENT	199
THE LESSON	200
SCIENCE AND POETRY	201
A NEW YEAR'S GREETING	202
♣ THE DISCOVERY	202
WITH A SEASHELL	203
♣ THE SECRET	204

HUMOR AND SATIRE.

FITZ ADAM'S STORY	205
THE ORIGIN OF DIDACTIC POETRY	226
THE FLYING DUTCHMAN	229
CHRIDIDINUS JOVEM REGNARE	231
TEMPORA MUTANTUR	239
IN THE HALF-WAY HOUSE	242
AT THE BURNS CENTENNIAL	245
IN AN ALBUM	253
AT THE COMMENCEMENT DINNER, 1866	254
A PARABLE	258

EPIGRAMS.

SAYINGS	259
INSCRIPTIONS	260
A MISCONCEPTION	261
THE BOSS	261
SUN-WORSHIP	261
CHANGED PERSPECTIVE	261
WITH A PAIR OF GLOVES LOST IN A WAGER	262
SIXTY-EIGHTH BIRTHDAY	262

INDEX OF FIRST LINES	263
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GENERAL INDEX OF TITLES	272
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POEMS OF THE WAR

THE WASHERS OF THE SHROUD

OCTOBER, 1861

ALONG a river-side, I know not where,
I walked one night in mystery of dream ;
A chill creeps curdling yet beneath my hair,
To think what chanced me by the pallid gleam
Of a moon-wraith that waned through haunted air.

Pale fireflies pulsed within the meadow-mist
Their halos, wavering thistledowns of light ;
The loon, that seemed to mock some goblin tryst,
Laughed ; and the echoes, huddling in affright,
Like Odin's hounds, fled baying down the night.

Then all was silent, till there smote my ear
A movement in the stream that checked my breath :
Was it the slow plash of a wading deer ?
But something said, " This water is of Death !
The Sisters wash a shroud, — ill thing to hear ! "

I, looking then, beheld the ancient Three
Known to the Greek's and to the Northman's
 creed,
That sit in shadow of the mystic Tree,