

SONNETS AND POEMS

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Sonnets and poems by Eleanor Farjeon

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ELEANOR FARJEON

**SONNETS
AND POEMS**

SONNETS AND POEMS, BY ELEANOR
FARJEON.




UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

TO VIOLA.

389545

¶ Some of these poems have appeared in *The Athenæum*, *Blackwood's Magazine*, *The Englishwoman*, *Root and Branch*, *The Saturday Westminster*, and *The Vineyard*: by the courtesy of whose editors they are reprinted in this volume.

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SONNETS. I.



AN cannot be a sophist to his heart,
He must look nakedly on his intent,
Expose it of all shreds of argument,
And strip it like a slave-girl in the mart.
What though with speckled truths and masked con-
He still deceives awhile the outer sense? [fessions
At barely half his honesty's expense
Still earns the world's excuse for the world's transgres-
[sions ?

His conscience cannot play the marshland elf,
Confusing that poor midnight wanderer,
His soul, with floundering lights and errant gleams.
O what damnation man would deal himself
If meeting her beyond his uttermost dreams
He still could face his soul and lie to her.

II.

O spare me from the hand of niggard love
That grasps at interest on what it lends,
And sets cold counsel as a guard above
The hoard it calculates before it spends.
Such misers of the riches of the heart
Bear their untested treasure to the grave,
And miss the whole, striving to save the part,
By the bare measure they have striven to save.

Is it for pride in saying at the end :
See, Life! I spent not all that thou hast given—
Lo, this and this and this I did not spend!
I stinted earth of bliss to add to heaven.
Alas, poor fools! life only gave ye this
Because earth has such need of heavenly bliss.

III.

Once, Love, be prodigal, nor look hereafter,
 Not though experience unrolls the years
 And bids thee count the cost of golden laughter
 In the dull coinage of leaden tears.
 O perjured wisdom! half-truth hedged with lies!
 That makes a common stake of joy and pain,
 When tears are man's most mortal certainties
 And every instant's joy his heavenly gain.

Ah, mystery that sowed our breath and being,
 What harvest wilt thou get of untilled powers?
 Why didst thou give us sight if not for seeing?
 Why if we dare not hear make hearing ours?
 Or why in life's name this high passion of love
 But in life's name its passionate height to prove?

IV.

Wilt thou put seals on love because men say
 Love is a thing that certain time will steal?
 As well, since night is certain after day,
 Might men their eyelids to the noontide seal.
 Nay! even though that worn-out tale were truth,
 And love, dear love, were time's assured dower,
 What profit canst thou get of cheated youth
 By paying usury before his hour?

I will not hear the sorry tune of time,
 That bitter quencher of young blessedness.
 Not to have proved young rapture is the crime,
 Unproven it will be quenched no less, no less.
 And thou wilt to the earth at last, time's scorn,
 Relinquishing a crown thou hast not worn.