

# **SONNETS AND POEMS**

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Sonnets and poems by John Masfield

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**JOHN MASEFIELD**

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AND POEMS**



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# *Sonnets and Poems*

By  
*JOHN MASEFIELD*

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I.

**L**ONG, long ago, when all the glittering  
earth  
Was heaven itself, when drunkards in the  
street  
Were like mazed kings shaking at giving  
birth  
To acts of war that sickle men like wheat ;  
When the white clover opened Paradise  
And God lived in a cottage up the brook,  
Beauty, you lifted up my sleeping eyes  
And filled my heart with longing with a look.  
And all the day I searched but could not find  
The beautiful dark-eyed who touched me  
there.  
Delight in her made trouble in my mind.  
She was within all Nature, everywhere.  
The breath I breathed, the brook, the flower,  
the grass,  
Were her, her word, her beauty, all she was.



## II.

NIGHT came again, but now I could  
not sleep ;

The owls were watching in the yew, the  
mice

Gnawed at the wainscot. The mid dark was  
deep.

The death-watch knocked the dead man's  
summons thrice.

The cats upon the pointed housetops peered  
About the chimneys, with lit eyes which saw  
Things in the darkness, moving, which they  
feared ;

The midnight filled the quiet house with  
awe.

So, creeping down the stair, I drew the bolt  
And passed into the darkness, and I knew  
That Beauty was brought near by my revolt.  
Beauty was in the moonlight, in the dew,  
But more within myself, whose venturous  
tread

Walked the dark house where death-ticks  
called the dead.

### III.

**E**VEN after all these years there comes  
the dream

Of lovelier life than this in some new earth,  
In the full summer of that unearthly gleam  
Which lights the spirit when the brain gives  
birth ;

Of a perfected I, in happy hours,  
Treading above the sea that trembles there,  
A path through thickets of immortal flowers  
That only grow where sorrows never were ;  
And, at a turn, of coming face to face  
With Beauty's self, that Beauty I have sought  
In women's hearts, in friends, in many a place,  
In barren hours passed at grips with thought,  
Beauty of woman, comrade, earth and sea,  
Incarnate thought come face to face with me.

#### IV.

**I**F I could come again to that dear place  
Where once I came, where Beauty lived  
and moved,

Where, by the sea, I saw her face to face,  
That soul alive by which the world has loved;  
If, as I stood at gaze among the leaves,  
She would appear again as once before,  
While the red herdsman gathered up his  
sheaves

And brimming waters trembled up the shore;  
If, as I gazed, her Beauty that was dumb,  
In that old time, before I learned to speak,  
Would lean to me and revelation come,  
Words to the lips and colour to the cheek,  
Joy with its searing-iron would burn me  
wise;

I should know all, all powers, all mysteries.