

**A BIRTH SONG:  
AND OTHER POEMS**

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A Birth Song: And Other Poems by William Freeland

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**WILLIAM FREELAND**

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**A Birth Song**

AND OTHER POEMS.

*Revised Edition*  
*William F. Howland*

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# A BIRTH SONG

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

WILLIAM FREELAND.

GLASGOW:

JAMES MACLEHOSE AND SONS,

*Publishers to the University.*

1882.

ANN 25.23





THIS was my vision on an April morn :  
While yet the Year was as a weanling babe,  
The Hours and Days brought gifts of innocence  
To please his wondering eye and curious ear—  
Beams of the sun and moon and ardent stars ;  
Soft winnowings from the South of wing or wind ;  
Shrill bursts of sea-blown trumpets from the North :  
The graceful magic of the frost and snow ;  
And blithe pulsations of the streams and brooks.  
Then as he grew in beauty and desire,  
Brought forth the loyal Months their offerings  
Of snowdrop, crocus, primrose, daffodil,  
Shy cowslip, celandine, and hyacinth,  
And daisy, silver ringed and golden eyed,  
And other starry gleamers of the wild,  
That breathed a fairy odour-storm, and gave  
The Year a foreflash of a happy date—  
The leaf and blossom of his kingly prime.  
And thrilling through the sweetness of his hope,  
He heard the voices of the wood and mead—  
Dim throstle, dusky merle, and dappled lark ;  
The sudden cuckoo, cunning of surprise ;  
And last, from spots of green, the bleat of lambs,

The tenderest cry of all the tender spring,  
 Came also to the Year the race of Men  
 With gifts of deeds—of beauty, truth, and love,  
 And charity that, in her gentle self,  
 Summeth all virtue, as a gem all light ;  
 Conquests of art and science, and the spoils  
 Of whole-brained, busy-fingered industry ;  
 And argosies of wealth from all the isles.  
 Then seeing me amid the throng, he asked,  
 "What bringest thou, unburthened as thou seem'st?"  
 "Now comes the terror," so I thought. But still,  
 Drawn by the kindly glamour of his eye,  
 And urged by one dear voice from the sweet heavens,  
 I bore me on. Nor stooping low, I said,  
 "This little Book of Song—I give it thee!"  
 "Thou darest!" "Yea, I dare!" And then he tossed  
 One after one the leaves, and hummed and smiled—  
 As April smiles on buds wherein he sees  
 Some glimmer of a summer that may come—  
 Then whispered, as I passed into the crowd :  
 "In all the noblest strivings of the bards,  
 The first still follows one that goes before,  
 The last still hears a toiling foot behind."

April, 1882.

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