

**THE BURNING
GAUZE, AND
OTHER POEMS**

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The burning gauze, and other poems by Lenore Croudace

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LENORE CROUDACE

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OTHER POEMS**

The Burning Gauze

and other

Poems

by

LENORE CROUDACE

San Francisco



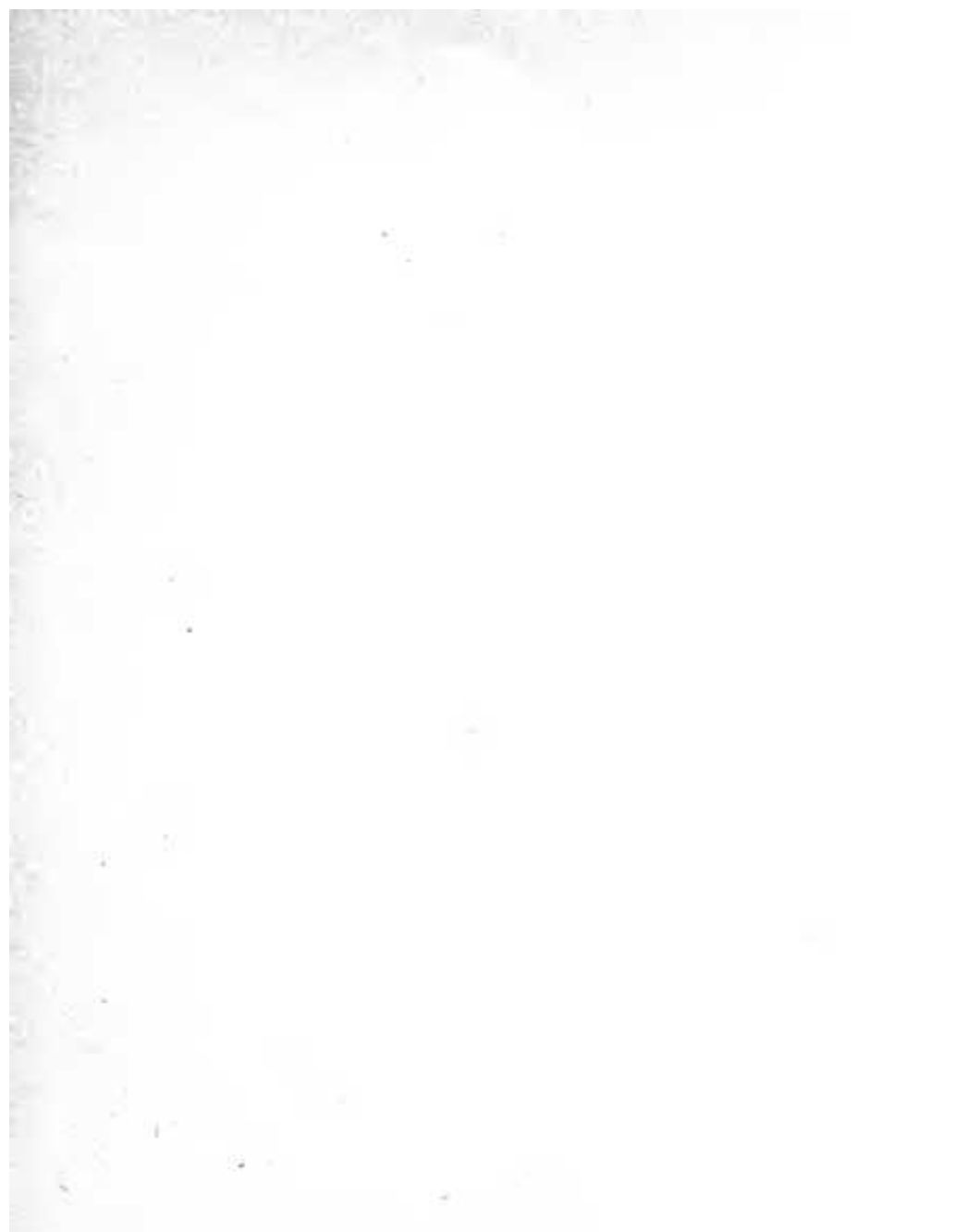
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Loves' Dedication

Deceit, you say, is void of all defense,
I am not what you thought, then love is dead,
Its greatest hurt, the hedges of pretense,
Where wistaria vines the ugly bushes thread.

Oh, let me plead before you curl your lip
In scorn for one who never learned to fly,
With lustrous pinions that through ether dip
To brush the lashes of your waiting eye.

Just pause and ask your deepest truth's own soul,
If love is just the rare escape you search
From what is base to that transcendent goal
Whose trust divine no blackened lie can smirch.

To meet your nimble fancy's upward lift,
I robed myself with priceless ancient lace,
A borrowed mantle from the mighty drift
Of heroic plays and chivalry's old grace.

LOVES' DEDICATION

My burning skin beneath its precious cloak,
Was shrivelled with a consciousness of shame;
A thief condemned, I listened for the stroke
Of doom,—your opened eyes to pierce and blame.

So fond, so foolish, deserving of your hate,—
Oh can't you see just there a straining love,
A spiral fairer than a column straight,
A blackbird gentler than the silvery dove?

Like a suffering brute in need of human speech,
Like ivy climbing up an unbroken wall,
Or child that strives the ocean waves to reach
And hold, I knew myself in hopeless thrall,

I dreamed till dreaming was a pain like flame,
The love I won from you was nobly won,
And guilty thoughts could not my longing tame,
Or make my fervor of a cooler sun.

And now you strip me of my actor's dress,
Not porcelain but common clay revealed,
You dare not spurn me more than priests who bless
A corpse whose soul they must to Heaven yield.

LOVES' DEDICATION

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I loved you in the face of coming scorn,
The mask I wore was tribute to your height,
And self-abasing, by torment bled and torn,—
I yet defy you to degrade my plight.

A tear? Rejected, but not, thank God, despised.
Pretense, perhaps, was worth the after-pain,
In all the ashes of the sham I prized,
There is one ember yet I can retain?

Ah! Yes! You'll find in all the waste of years,
In faded letter-leaves and books long-read,
One phrase of love whose very guilt endears,—
My created role remains when I am dead.

Good-bye! though trampled all your love in grime,
Like strings of pearls concealed in filthy rags,
Remember, some one cares through endless time,
A prisoner of his sin, whose heart-beat flags.