

**VAGARIES**

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Vagaries by Florence Brooks Emerson

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**FLORENCE BROOKS EMERSON**

**VAGARIES**



# VAGARIES

FLORENCE BROOKS EMERSON



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# VAGARIES

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# VAGARIES

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## *The Fringe of War*

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**A** WOMAN, tall and pale, came to stand on a high balcony looking out to sea. Was she in the prosaic world among this wonder of earth and waves and far horizon?

The shadow as of an eternal absence darkened her heart; for absence is never bridged; it makes a chasm between old and new; all is old on the brink we have left; all is past. The one we meet is not the one who said farewell. Shall we perish in the depths of the lost, or, speechless, seek the miracle of new life?

She dreamed of the fairest of lands in a blur of indolent melan-

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choly. Nothing on the western boundary of the sea could better hold the poetry of the world-places than this villa on the coast, — nothing so sweet had fallen to her, unstriving. The pines sighed with the sea, overhanging the strong, lush waters. And dawn filled the edge of the sea with a fresh dream of the day to come, and the strong morning of the day passed with promises which were fading. For the daytime was a flippant lover, leaving naught to beguile the dusk, the eternal dusk, the blank night of lost hope.

Of a sudden a thousand stirring thoughts startle her memory: the hard, hurrying city is not far away the war is calling. Insistent calls her to that distant trop

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## The Fringe of War

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scene where the voice of the barbarous, brilliant South is clamoring brazenly.

And yet the night is so still, the air so coolly calm. Her mind is shaken as if by an earthquake. The inner life, that hidden fire, is raging. Will it ruin the fabric of her being, flare into uncaring space with a fierce burst of denied utterance? O, the inner life, the silence of the inner life! One soul cannot speak to the heart of the whirling world: one soul cannot speak to another.

The dreary frogs singing in the marsh, are the voice of an endless dream. The waters lie dark and still, the airs move soft and cool, the night covers all. And is she the mad one that would rush into the wake of the war? O, to rest,