

**THE
POETRY OF LIFE**

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The Poetry of Life by Bliss Carman

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BLISS CARMAN

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The Poetry of Life.

By
Bliss Carman

*Author of "Pipes of Pan," "The Kinship
of Nature," "The Friendship of
Art," "Sappho," etc.*



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CALIFORNIA

To My Sponsors in California

*J. O'B. Gunn, of San Francisco,
and
W. Irving Way, of Los Angeles*

WILL you not accept this volume, my good friends, in ever grateful remembrance of our happy days under your Californian sky?

I recall now, with the continent between us, how gladly I met you on that morning of my arrival, as I strayed through the hall of the St. Francis, feeling like a mouse in a new loft, and how quickly I was made to feel at home. Of all the great-hearted hospitality of the Coast which had me in its generous keeping at San Francisco, at San José, at Monterey and Santa Barbara, at Pasadena and Los Angeles and Santa Monica, I can

To My Sponsors

never adequately speak. If this were a *magnum opus*, and there were enough of it to divide, I should have to put a score of names on my dedicatory page in order to indicate anything like my full indebtedness. As it is, perhaps those who do not find themselves spoken of by name, will be indulgent enough to receive this more tacit acknowledgment of their kindly favour and friendship, on the trail and in the town.

You were always, if I may say it, so constant and painstaking in all the finest offices of comradeship, so ready and solicitous, that I verily believe if I should find myself suddenly at the Great Portal, and my references required, I should instinctively answer, "I am a friend of Mr. Gunn's" — or Mr. Way's, whichever name happened to slip from my tongue at that embarrassing moment. If I were so unfortunate as to have outlived either of you, and to come after you to the shining Doubtful Entrance, I should have no anxiety at all about my reception;

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To My Sponsors

for I would know that you had already secured me not only an admission, but probably an introduction to the Management, and an invitation to supper with a few of the choice Stars.

The book to be dedicated to you ought really to deal with the Art of Friendship; but since I am not likely ever to write such a work, let me have the genuine pleasure of offering you the first that comes to hand since we parted. Indeed, if ever the Art of Friendship should be written,—some golden book on that high theme worthy to stand beside Cicero and Emerson,—it would be a stalk without pith for me, unless its pages were redolent of your names and some memorable tribute to your fine instinct in the art.

Now that I have finished the writing and am beginning the final revision as it goes to press, I have, as one always must have in such cases, quarter-hours, half-hours, whole hours and days of misgiving (or illumina-

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tion), when I sit aghast at the meagre result, in view of all that one knows might have been done. If I am to go through the ordeal of proof-reading with my sanity intact, and not qualify for the funny-house through fits of melancholy, I shall have to keep your kindly faith constantly in mind. I shall have to think to myself that while you are delicate and exacting critics, you are also the most indulgent of friends, and will be sure to find some value in the pages, even if you have to look for it between the lines. I shall be more than conscious of all the shortcomings which must be evident in such a collection of essays on poetry as this, when compared with other books on the same subject, by men whose names I hesitate even to recall. But you, I know, will make no such comparison. Your generosity will overcome your scholarship, and, with all your knowledge of good books, and your love of the best in letters, you will still be unable to find fault when you read herein. I can see you

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turn from page to page and smile with only the kindest appreciation; or when some sentence or paragraph is farther from the truth than the rest, I can hear you offer your suggestions in the gentlest words.

You may not be critics of the sort that is best for one, very likely, but you are of the sort that one likes best. And if I could always feel as I shall feel while revising this undeniable offspring, I should never need any severer criticism than yours, for I should never again attempt to write.

I should never again be venturing forth from the safe old beaches of silence upon the splendid perilous alluring sea of English prose, where even to-day I can behold so many hardy young captains sailing without disaster their fairy shallops in the sun. They have all voyaged successfully to the Fortunate Islands, and are bringing their untold treasures safely into port, while we stand offering our timorous applause. Yet such is the infatuation of mortals, I dare say I