

**THE POETICAL WORKS
OF LUCY LARCOM;
HOUSEHOLD EDITION**

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The Poetical Works of Lucy Larcom; Household Edition by Lucy Larcom

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Lucy Parsons

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EARLIER POEMS.

HANNAH BINDING SHOES.

X POOR lone Hannah,
Sitting at the window, binding shoes :
Faded, wrinkled,
Sitting, stitching, in a mournful muse.
Bright-eyed beauty once was she,
When the bloom was on the tree :
Spring and winter,
Hannah's at the window, binding shoes.

Not a neighbor,
Passing nod or answer will refuse,
To her whisper,
"Is there from the fishers any news?"
Oh, her heart's adrift, with one
On an endless voyage gone !
Night and morning,
Hannah's at the window, binding shoes.

Fair young Hannah,
Ben, the sunburnt fisher, gayly wooes :
Hale and clever,
For a willing heart and hand he sues.
May-day skies are all aglow,
And the waves are laughing so !
For her wedding
Hannah leaves her window and her shoes.

May is passing :
Mid the apple boughs a pigeon cooes.
Hannah shudders,
For the mild southwester mischief brews.
Round the rocks of Marblehead,
Outward bound, a schooner sped :
Silent, lonesome,
Hannah's at the window, binding shoes.

'T is November,
 Now no tear her wasted cheek bedews.
 From Newfoundland
 Not a sail returning will she lose,
 Whispering hoarsely, "Fishermen,
 Have you, have you heard of Ben?"
 Old with watching,
 Hannah's at the window, binding shoes.

Twenty winters
 Bleach and tear the ragged shore she views.
 Twenty seasons:—
 Never one has brought her any news.
 Still her dim eyes silently
 Chase the white sails o'er the sea:
 Hopeless, faithful,
 Hannah's at the window, binding shoes.

SKIPPER BEN.

SAILING away!
 Losing the breath of the shores in May,
 Dropping down from the beautiful bay,
 Over the sea-slope vast and gray!
 And the skipper's eyes with a mist are blind;
 For a vision comes on the rising wind,
 Of a gentle face that he leaves behind,
 And a heart that throbs through the fog-bank dim,
 Thinking of him.

Far into night,
 He watches the gleam of the lessening light
 Fixed on the dangerous island height,
 That bars the harbor he loves from sight:
 And he wishes, at dawn, he could tell the tale
 Of how they had weathered the southwest gale,
 To brighten the cheek that had grown so pale
 With a wakeful night among spectres grim,—
 Terrors for him.

Yo-heave-yo!
 Here's the Bank where the fishermen go.
 Over the schooner's sides they throw
 Tackle and bait to the deeps below.
 And Skipper Ben in the water sees,
 When its ripples curl to the light land breeze,
 Something that stirs like his apple-trees,
 And two soft eyes that beneath them swim,
 Lifted to him.

Hear the wind roar,
 And the rain through the slit sails tear and pour!
 "Steady! we'll scud by the Cape Ann shore,
 Then hark to the Beverly bells once more!"
 And each man worked with the will of ten;
 While up in the rigging, now and then,
 The lightning glared in the face of Ben,
 Turned to the black horizon's rim,
 Scowling on him.

Into his brain
 Burned with the iron of hopeless pain,
 Into thoughts that grapple, and eyes that strain,
 Pierces the memory, cruel and vain!
 Never again shall he walk at ease,
 Under his blossoming apple-trees,
 That whisper and sway to the sunset breeze,
 While the soft eyes float where the sea-gulls skim,
 Gazing with him.

How they went down
 Never was known in the still old town:
 Nobody guessed how the fisherman brown,
 With the look of despair that was half a frown,
 Faced his fate in the furious night,
 Faced the mad billows with hunger white,
 Just within hail of the beacon-light
 That shone on a woman sweet and trim,
 Waiting for him.

Beverly bells,
 Ring to the tide as it ebbs and swells!
 His was the anguish a moment tells, —
 The passionate sorrow death quickly knells.
 But the wearing wash of a lifelong woe
 Is left for the desolate heart to know,
 Whose tides with the dull years come and go,
 Till hope drifts dead to its stagnant brim,
 Thinking of him.

HILARY.

"HILARY!"
 Summer calls, across the sea!
 Like white flowers upon the tide,
 In and out the vessels glide;
 But no wind on all the main
 Sends thy blithe soul home again:
 Every salt breeze moans for thee,
 Hilary!

EARLIER POEMS.

Hilary,
 Welcome Summer's step will be,
 Save to those beside whose door
 Doleful birds sit evermore
 Singing, " Never comes he here,
 Who made every season's cheer :"
 Dull the June that brings not thee,
 Hilary !

Hilary,
 What strange world has sheltered thee?
 Here the soil beneath thy feet
 Rang with songs, and blossomed sweet :
 Still the blue skies ask of Earth,
 Blind and dumb without thy mirth,
 Where she hides thy heart of glee,
 Hilary !

Hilary,
 All things shape a sigh for thee !
 Over waves, and fields, and flowers,
 Through the lapse of odorous hours,
 Breathes a lonely, longing sound,
 As of something sought, unfound :
 Lorn are all things ; lorn are we,
 Hilary !

Hilary !
 Oh, to sail in quest of thee,
 On the trade-wind's steady tune,
 On the hurrying monsoon,
 Far through torrid seas, that lave
 Dry, hot sands, a breathless grave. —
 Sad as vain the search would be,
 Hilary !

Hilary,
 Chase the sorrow from the sea !
 Summer-heart, bring summer near,
 Warm, and fresh, and airy-clear !
 Dead thou art not ! dead is pain ;
 Now Earth sees and sings again,
 Death, to hold thee, Life must be,
 Hilary !

ON THE BEACH.

WE stroll as children, thou and I,
 Upon the echoing beach,
 With younger children playing nigh ;
 The surf-boats dance, the ships go by,
 Beyond the Cape's vague reach.

It is a comfort once to be
 Like those young hearts again;
 To feel, O friend beloved, with thee,
 The broad refreshment of the sea,
 In weary soul and brain.

The white feet pattering on the sand,
 The wings that dip and rise,
 The mower's whistle from the land,
 And girlhood's laugh, and murmuring strand,
 All blend and harmonize.

And glimmering beach, and plover's flight,
 And that long surge that rolls
 Through bands of green and purple light,
 Are fairer to our human sight,
 Because of human souls.

Seest thou yon fleet of anchored isles
 Upon the sea-line gray?
 My thoughts o'erfloat those murmurous miles,
 To land where bygone summer smiles
 On gorge and sheltering bay.

I wander with a spirit there,
 Along the enchanted shore:
 We breathe the soft, sea-scented air,
 And think no isle is half so fair
 As rocky Appledore.

She turns to me her large, dark eyes:
 Were ever eyes so true?
 The twilight flushes, fades, and dies;
 The beacon flames; the white stars rise
 Across pale gulfs of blue.

Those eyes on earth no longer shine;
 And yet it seems to me
 I see their light, O friend, in thine;
 They add a tenderness divine
 Unto this tremulous sea.

Seen and unseen are interblent;
 The waves that hither roll
 In whiter curves of foam are spent,
 And deeper seems the green content
 Of earth, for her sweet soul.

Love is not smouldering in the urn,
 Nor crumbling in the grave:
 Life passes, only to return,
 In tints that glow, and stars that burn
 Upon the reflux wave.