Friends and Gardens

Selected by

LUCY THOMAS MCKAIG
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LURA THOMAS MCNAIR

1938

ALENTOUR HOUSE
3 Hart's Avenue
Lowell, Mass.
To help perpetuate the enchanting memories of the gardens my grandmothers made:

Emmeline Yarbrough Thomas, whose garden of lilacs, smoke trees, myrtle, Sweet Betsey, pinks and blue flag extended from the great elm trees to the wicket gate which led to the hills beyond.

Rosanna Dalrymple Thomas whose garden of roses, violets and aromatic herbs extended from the huge chimney to the apple orchard, and was a haven for birds and children.

As seed, slips and plants shared with friends extended beauty over wide areas and warmed many hearts, so may these verses react today.

LURA THOMAS MCNAIR
FRIENDS

Friends are made, and friends are lost
I care not for the latter
The former ones I love the most
The others do not matter
In making friends we make mistakes
And those we must erase
And on the board of faithfulness
Strive to fill the empty space!

R. Lindner
Illinois

FLOWER CHARM

The lily has its special spell of spiritual eternity,
The rose speaks of burning love and pride;
The violet, chaste, fragrant virgin speaks of bland humility
The daisies speak of paths through which we hope to stride.
The languid fern tells of glamorous elegance
The honeysuckle spells poetic sweetness that can entrance
Even a hardened scientist, and ah me!
The jasmine so much like a tiny little dove
Can even make him fall head over heels in love.

Hortensia Trevino
California

BROWN POOL

Not emerald nor turquoise, but the clear
And lovely brown of fallen autumn leaves;
Of tree stumps which have made their lasting bier
Upon the sands of quietness where weaves
The golden sunlight in between the cool,
Inviting shadows of this topaz pool.

Gilean Douglas
Illinois
MEMORY'S HERITAGE

Cobweb patterns of spun glass,
Shadow lace across the grass;
Tracery of artist lines
Etching elms or spicy pines.
Dance of fairies summer nights,
Golden glow from firefly lights;
Perfume from the garden's wealth,
Movements hesitant in stealth.
Summer night and summer morn,
There is wondrous beauty born,
Wealth to fill the winter hour.
Memory, what priceless dower!
Winifred Langworthy Brown

A DAFFODIL

Little yellow face
From a snowy place,
You are a breath o' spring
That makes our hearts ring.
A daffodil are you,
So fresh and new.
You come from winter's cold,
Dainty, and yellow as gold.
Sara Dunlap

OUR FRIENDS

Friends take our faults with our virtues
They stick to us close all the way;
They give to our life a meaning
And ask but our friendship as pay.
William Aspinall
CONCEALMENT

Beneath brave, cheerful leaves,
On every tree,
The heart of it oft grieves,
And hides deep scars,
From hard-fought wars,
And Spartan-like deceives,
All silently.

Beneath the placid brow
Of many a man,
Deep-furrowed by Time's plow,
Are unhealed scars,
From Life's fierce spars,
Concealed as well, I trow,
With mute lip's ban.

Concealment is a cloak
Most of us wear;
And from its refuge joke;
Yet wounds leave scars,
And censure mars,
Our mute lips peace invoke
And smiling, bear.

Alice Sutton McGeorge Oklahoma

LADY NIGHT

Night is a lovely lady
Who soothes away my fears;
But, sometimes in compassion,
She drenches me with tears!

Flozari Rockwood Ohio
GARDEN LOVERS

Tiger Lilies
When tiger lilies bow their heads,
It is but mock humility;
A rusty ash their pollen sheds
When tiger lilies bow their heads;
The pistil with the stamen weds,
Despite their quaint fragility...
When tiger lilies bow their heads,
It is but mock humility.
Margarette Ball Dickson Minnesota

OLD FRIENDS ARE BEST

Old friends are best.
We meet them through the years:
They knew our youthful hopes,
Remember childish tears.
Whatever be the time,
Or what be the test,
There's a tie that e'er will bind:
Old friends are best.
Old friends are best.
Through struggle, joy or pain
We may misunderstand,
But old times call again.
Heartstrings may twang with grief,
Some our efforts jest;
If we listen, comes the thought,
"Old friends are best."
Old friends are best.
We leave them for the new!
Jewels on the path of life,
We find are very few.
Our hearts may call in need,
Some will fail the test.
But we'll find when life is done
Old friends are best.
Starr von Fluss California
CHILDSH WISDOM

I love your childish wisdom,
That proves itself so true;
Young lips are often wiser
Than old, I have learned of you.

Flue Dust

Magda Brandon Illinois

TO AN OLD FRIEND

Long we've traveled the way together
O'er sunlit meadows, thru vales of rain
Love doubled our joys in every weather
And love has always divided our pain.
Some hills have been long, and steep the going
And sometimes we've skidded clear off the trail
But always we've salvaged each other knowing
While love endures we cannot fail.

Mary M. Cain California

COSMOS

Like a fairy in the night,
Weaving in the autumn blight,
Colors red, and pink, and yellow
Tints of ochre, rich and mellow;
From the sky you snatched a star
For a pattern -- then afar
As the gates flung open wide
The heavenly garden you espied.
Kissing sunsets on your way,
Blending age with fragrant May;
Bleak November, fretful wild,
Tell me how you have beguiled
To your bosom, bare and drear
The fairest flower of all the year.

Martha J. Opie Florida
TO A FRIEND

The long loved melody eagerly awaited
To be heard again, to be translated
Into the intimacies of one's soul,
Living color that plays the leading role
In a master's canvas; the expression of a dream
Caressed with a flickering sunbeam,
The beauty of a dainty bloom
Mysterious as it makes perfume,
The inspiration thrusting one
To aspire to the very sun:
My memories blend
Into the image of you, my friend.

The loneliness of life is soothed into peace;
A sudden sweetness is born and given release
Through you. Your charms are as a screen.
The symphony of your ego is caressing;
Your soft eyes pray a blessing.
I know that grace
Must have smiled upon your birth. No trace
In you of the petty. You soar
To the heights like a bird. You explore
Sad hearts and cheer like the gentle dove.
Indeed your presence is symbolic of all love.

Nickie Lane

MY POEMS

Not on the street,
My Garden sits
For every passerby,
But in this hidden place,
For those who seek to find.

Carrow De Vries
KNOWING HOW

Glad hearts are singing for joy today,
For bright is the world and fair;
Out in the garden the flowers bloom,
And nod in the summer air.

We see the birds swing in leafy tree,
Like blossoms upon the bough,
They sing their praises of joy to God.
In sweetest notes, for they know how.

Sue Stuart Brame  Mississippi

LEAVES

Leaves, dear Leaves,
Hasten thou to cover my naked bough,
Cold and listless have I been, bare and stark --
No song of nightingale nor yet of lark,
Comes quivering through a mass of green,
No blue of heaven glimpsed between.
But naked lift I up my arms,
Asking for those dearer charms.
The shade of midday
Felt beneath thy lacy mass.
Thy shadows on the fragrant grass.
While man resting from his toil,
Seeks me product of the soil,
And at my gnarled and twisted feet,
Finds heaven here and calm retreat,
Shakes off the restlessness of strife
By slumber entering into newer life.

Isabel C. Doud  South Carolina
GRANDMOTHER’S GARDEN

There is a host of flowers there
Myrtles mingling with the roses
Hollyhocks and dahlias rare,
Myriad rows of old-time posies.
Where lilies and lilacs in loveliness live
And larkspur and hyacinth a fragrance give.
Stocks and phlox and scented thyme
Mix with pinks and jessamine —
Thousands more that will not rhyme —
Purple pansies in their prime,
Where iridescent humming-birds and bees
Are buzzing through the blossoming sweet-peas.
Pale peonies and iris too
Are blooming with begonias blue;
There you’ll find that bluebells grow
Harebelle with them row on row.
Where lilies and lilacs in loveliness live
And unto bees and birds their honeys give.

Lura Thomas McNair North Carolina

MY GARDEN AND YOU

The loveliest thing in my garden
Is not the lily tall;
Nor brilliant hollyhock
That leans against the wall.
The sweet Alyssium is not as sweet
Nor the violets as shy
As the one whom there I meet
When stars stud the twilight sky.
The sweetest thing in my garden
Is not a tulip rare
Nor blue delphinium buds
Beside my rustic chair.
Oh fairer far than any of these
Is the blossom I would choose;
I'd press you to my heart for aye
And never let you loose.

Genevieve Monigold

A PRIMROSE PATH

I never had a primrose path, my own,
Where flowers bloomed, no bitter - sweet - -
Were mine and mine alone!
Yes, that is true for you, for me,
For that would heaven be!
A primrose path all colors bright,
Would never be just right,
If only flowers blossomed
On the path our feet must tread.
There would be no use of heaven
For our beloved dead!
To find our brightest primrose path,
As we travel on our way,
We must look beyond life's sorrows,
As we walk our path each day.
We must search for other heart aches,
E'en thru our blinding tears,
'Tis there we'll find the flowers,
As our days grow into years.

. . . Sometimes our path is overgrown,
'Neath life's hard, stony way,
But keep the faith, the flowers are there,
Some where, some day.

Carrye Sylvia Jacob            Kentucky
A GOLDEN HOUR

Out in the garden just now,
I caught the breath of a flower,
And it carried me back to you,
And a long ago golden hour.
Strange the years go rolling past
And the days slip in and out,
But a golden hour, like that
Someone will always last.

Winona Flaven Nevada

HIS FRIENDS

His friends were chosen from the common folks
Those ones who pleyed their nets or labored long,
Because from such I'm sure he knew full well,
Grew friendship that was brave and kind and strong.
He called them from the sea to follow him,
Amidst life's battles that were hard to face,
They lived so close to him his strength was theirs,
He promised unto them 'sufficient grace.'
Oh! brave disciples that my Saviour chose,
It was your task to spread his gospel rare.
You were his friends because he called you so,
Your lives were one of service and of prayer.

Carl B. Ike Missouri

PRAYER

When the last long shadows come,
And my blundering feet are still,
I pray to God, that I may see
One star, still bright above a hill.

Vernon Reid Witcher
THE DANDELION
Perkey little dandelion
You're a trespasser I see,
Always in a place
Where you shouldn't be.
Bobbing up serenely
On a smooth front lawn;
I'm sure the gardener wishes
You never had been born,
Better smile your sweetest
For soon you will be dead,
Here comes the lawnmower
To chop off your head.

Martha R. Lord

WITH GOD
I sink the spade and turn the sod
And drink the earth's delicious wine,
Reflecting that I work with God
To bring the rose and columbine.

Edith Moody Rittenour Michigan

MARCH
The last snow flakes have fallen
Out of the dull gray sky.
The wind bends low the willows --
And then skids by,
Deep in the wood the fairies
Are trimming a new gown,
And little gnomes are busy
Welding a silver crown . . .
While Spring, the sleeping Princess,
Is dreaming pale and still,
Beyond the curve of pine wood
Across the snow-flaked hill.
But on her breast the snow flakes
Are melting one by one,
Beneath the stirring kisses
Of the bold March sun!

Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni Arkansas
FRIENDSHIP

Since passing as my bosom friend,
I need not words be weighing;
For in the end I know that you
Will sift out what you think is true
What e'er my words be saying;
And throw away what might offend
Preserving friendship to the end.
Henry Charles Suter        Florida

WHERE THOUGHTS PETAL BEST

We all have a garden
We come to for rest,
While thoughts of the season
Petal their best.
Here the perfume of wisdom,
Cool and slow,
Is a later decision
In embryo.
Lily of silence . . .
A hawthorn's flame . . .
Or the wind that stirred them
Are joys to reclaim.
Delight or decision,
'The calm that we find
Is a budding beauty,
Refreshing the mind.
Anne Phillips Hattan       Oregon

PARADOXICAL

When Life gave me her best, I sighed
That youth and love could yield no more;
Today I find myself more satisfied
With the barest crumb tossed carelessly aside
From an unrequited love's small store.
Melba Johnson               Michigan
WHAT LOVELY THINGS

What lovely things
A morning-glory vine can do:
A bright wreath rings
The old elm's base, the blue
Day-flowers between.

Now what is this
That crowns the grape-arbor
With radiant bliss!
Not one, or two; perhaps a score,
That here convene.
The trellised rose
Seems pleased to bloom again;
Now, changed from prose
To poet's joy, the lane,
So fair a scene.
The lilac, too,
Bereft for many many moons...
Entranced to view
Her form graced with festoons
Of glamorous sheen.

A locust bough,
Upon each lace-frilled spray,
Presents, I vow,
The dearest bride's - bouquet
I've ever seen.

Oh, garden sprite,
What precious work you've done!
My love away...
Returned, what joy will light
Her face, serene.

Laura S. Beck                 New York
REST

Here in this mystic garden,
Wholesome love and impulse thrive;
where
All harmonies of color,
So beautifully blended;
with
Peace and love's tranquility,
And sweetly pure suggested;
that
Quiet brooding over all,
Touching mind and soul of man;
then
All cares of life are hushed by
Nature's voiceless lullaby.

S. L. Dulin Indiana

SUNSET

A sunbeam loved a moonbeam
So it loitered on the way.
It flushed the fading sunset
And it kissed the dying day.
It lingered in the twilight
As if loath to part,
It longed to show the moonbeam
It's gracious loving heart.
But Ah, for fondest wishes—
Too late the moonbeam came,
To the poor dying lover,
Who spent his life in flame.

Isabel C. Doud South Carolina

URBAN THOUGHT

Some sidewalks chatter
when trampled by hurrying feet
And their jealous patter
envies some deserted street.

J. Calder Joseph Indiana
WHEN LILACS BLOOM

There are thoughts that calm my soul
And drive away deep gloom,
Bringing joy and peace and love—
In Spring—when lilacs bloom.

Their fragrance fills the air
Their beauty lights my room,
Bringing hope and sweet content
In Spring, when lilacs bloom!

Mamie Harper Whitley North Carolina

OLD FRIENDS

You may’ve forgotten me
But I’m remembering you,
That old familiar smile
And voice I always knew.

The welcome of your eyes
A grip and hand-shake too,
I can’t tell you, my friend,
The good they’d really do.

Gilmore Ward Bryant

OUR GARDENS

We plant our gardens and we cultivate
With care and effort, watch through days and nights.
With tears and perspiration, irrigate
The tender plants; indulge their appetites.
We shield them from the wind and too much sun,
And guard them against chill and early frost.
We shape our views to meet the seasons’ run,
And seldom stop to sum the growing cost.

With trembling hope and subjugated pride,
We sense the beauty that our toil should bring;
And though we must let time alone decide,
We weave our lives into our gardening.
Yet often we awake to find our seeds
Became, somehow, involved with noxious weeds.

Jack Greenberg California
MY DEAREST FRIEND

If life were to give me all that I wish
First I'd ask for success in the work that I choose
Something vital to which I could set myself to
And master it finally to feel worthy of you.

And then I would ask for my son's welfare
That he might learn truthfulness and always be square
To give him love's strength when he needs it the most
That his life might be finer within its small scope.

And then I would ask that my love never fade
In the picture of you I have carefully made
Greater than emotion, sweet as that is,
Love that makes a day brighter and easier to live.

Kay McCullough  California

WHITE HERON

A water scene is painted on my heart,
And down the vista of the years,
I see a heron standing in the marsh,
Ghost like in a mist of tears;
Tall green reeds against a sapphire sky,
Like fingers traced upon the air,
The lines that beauty such as this must die,
And heron white and very fair.
Yet may they not in marshes green,
Beyond their fading finite form,
Find sanctuary where beauty and where birds
Seek refuge from the ravage of time's storm.

Maude Waddell,  South Carolina
CAMPIN' IN THE LAND OF SKY-BLUE WATER

So long I've been wearyin'
'Tho shucks! I'm not keerin'
For Sky Blue Water's now callin' me;
That pike, he's a reelin'
In the sun, he's fine feelin';
I'll soon be a meetin' him for the jamboree.

Then Janey'll be a lookin'
For the pike she'll be a cookin',
She'll be a heatin' the butter in the pan,
The girls, she'll be cajolin'
For bread crumbs to be a rollin'
Ready for the comin' of their fisherman.

There won't be any guessin'
It'll be a queenly dressin'
'Nointed and browned with McElhenny sauce,
No more flavorin'
Dish'LL be savorin'
Of white-meat ed pike, of fish he's the boss.

So folks, when trouble bearin'
And big loads a carryin',
Just get to feelin' like you were an otter,
First thing you'll be knowin'
You'll have all your plans for goin'
And you'll be a campin
In the land of Sky Blue Water.

Blanche McElhiney Ohio

PERFUME

Let me have only just a stray
Wild lily blooming by the way,
Or one embossed deep in leaves
Sending its perfume where the eaves

Have a window that opens wide.
At break of day its breath will glide
To me. I'll breathe the incense rare
That rises from the flower most fair.

Imogen Weeks Massachusetts