

# *The Poetry of Clarence J. Martín*

*As compiled by Peter L. Martín, 2023*

*Clarence Judson Martín (1871–1956) grew up in Nebraska; spent parts of his life in Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, and Oklahoma; and lived his last 33 years in Southern California. He had varied careers as an evangelist, a newspaperman, and a publicity agent, switching back and forth and sometimes overlapping these professional roles. He was a talented singer and often accompanied himself on the guitar during church services and at social gatherings.*

*He also wrote poems, which were often published in local newspapers and regional magazines. So far as we know, though, this volume represents the first effort to compile his poems in one place.*

## **The Laggard Season** (1908)

Cloudless the happy sky and warmed with sun the earth;  
Benign the southern breeze and kind the north,  
    While the festive meadow lark  
    Sings twixt sunset and the dark  
And sows the somber landscape with his mirth.

There's a flash of light where the bubbles ride,  
Circling 'round the sandbar in the middle tide,  
    For the cold snap's ice and snow  
    Was shattered long ago  
And lost upon the current far and wide.

The pasture lands stretch far in russet glory;  
The fields rank with stubble tell the story—  
    How the farmer's header-box  
    Cruising the sea of golden stalks  
Sand with its rich cargo like a dory.

The snow-birds haunt the path where cattle go,  
The crows fleck the dusk at evening glow,  
    And far beneath the sky  
    The dusty corn fields lie  
And wait for the blessing of the snow.

(Published Feb. 14, 1908 in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita, Kansas, p. 6)

## When the Killdeer Comes in the Spring (1908)

When the killdeer comes in Spring—  
I will lift my weary eyes  
To the beauty of clear skies—  
I will bathe my soul in song,  
And forget all fancied wrong.

When the killdeer comes in Spring—  
I will ope my heavy ear  
To the music of good cheer,  
I will let my vain cares go  
With the drifts of melting snow.

When the killdeer comes in Spring—  
I will wash my brow with rain  
And be free from clinging pain;  
I will lift my tardy arm  
To save a friend from harm.

When the killdeer comes in Spring—  
I will cleanse me from the stain  
And the thirst for sordid gain—  
I will swing my larder door  
Wide open to the poor.

When the killdeer comes in Spring—  
I will seek neglected friends;  
For lax duty make amends.  
I will dry the falling tears  
Caused by slights of former years.

When the killdeer comes in Spring—  
I will kiss an orphan child,  
And find a prodigal exiled.  
Fight for truth and strong defend  
The fair name of my friend.

When the killdeer comes in Spring—  
I will watch by dying bed  
And plant a flower o'er the dead.  
I will be tender, kind and true  
As the skies above me are blue.

(Published Mar. 26, 1908, in *The Fort Scott Republican*, Fort Scott, Kansas, p. 5)

## Lake Buckingham (1908)

I know a place where the mud hen swims  
In her drear delight all day,  
Where the musk-rat parts the clinging moss  
In his lonely water-way.

Where the lily makes its leafy bed  
On the north lake's placid wave,  
And the turtle leaves his muddy trail  
In the depths of his watery grave.

Where the pretty sun fish slips,  
Through his dreamy wilderness;  
And the shy teal leaves his reedy home  
To meet the wave's caress.

I know, too, where the old bluff frowns  
At his wrinkles in the lake,  
And how the road winds round its base  
Where the tall bulrushes shake.

Where the startled jacksnipe runs  
Along the shell-bound bar  
And the bittern hastens from the flags  
At the ring of the sweet guitar.

There the chittering swallow dips  
His wing in the silver sheen,  
And the yellow gold of the yonkapin  
Shines from its bank of green.

There jeweled hands gather shells  
Where boating parties glide;  
There merry hearts have sung aloud  
And breaking ones have sighed.

I love the storm of the Rocky's top,  
And the rest of Pacific calm,  
But in my dreams I hear the splash  
Of the oars at Buckingham.

(Originally published in *Outdoor Life* magazine  
(date unknown) and reprinted June 4, 1908, in *The Fort Scott Republican*, Fort Scott, Kansas, p. 5)

## **Pity Him** (1908)

O, pity him who earth bound dwells  
Bat-like in caves and sunken wells,  
Who smirks content and never sees  
"The stars shine thru his cypress trees"

O, pity him who never looks  
Beyond the dictum of his books  
Nor sees the stamp of Deity  
On sea and sky, on flower and tree.

O, pity him whose morbid frown  
Has kept the mirth of childhood down.  
And pity him whose cruel whip  
Has hushed the sound of laughing lip.

O, pity him who has not felt  
The sting of pain and humbly knelt  
With trembling lip, alone, heart-broke  
To feel the press of sorrow's yoke.

And pity him whose aching head  
Tosses on a lonely bed;  
Who knows no touch of wifely arms,  
Nor baby lips, nor childhood's charms.

Thrice pity him who does not know  
The joy to lift a brother's woe  
Tho' he God's throne with prayer assail  
Till polished be his altar rail.

And O, God pity him who draws  
His purse strings tight with miser claws;  
Who hugs his gods of gold and rust,  
And with them crumbles into dust.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita,  
Kansas, June 9, 1908, p. 3)

## **Come Ye Poets** (1908)

Come, ye poets, sing to me  
Of the June-time witchery,  
How the amorous southern breeze  
Sows the clamorous honey-bees  
Thru the fragrant apple trees.

How the plover spreads his wings  
O'er the fields where creeping things,  
'Tranced with sun and moonlight rays,  
Scramble thru' the dreamy maze  
Of dewy nights and sunny days.

Sing of grass and rush grown streams,  
Where the gad-fly's armor gleams,  
And the startled killdeers flee  
At the truant's shout of glee,  
Where the current lips his knee.

Tell of morning's ruddy beam,  
And of noon-time's fiery gleam;  
Tell of evening thunder heads  
Asleep in sumptuous fleecy beds,  
Rocked on aerial water sheds.

Sing of wood and pasture hill,  
Far from smoke of mart and mill,  
Where the summer's magic power  
With the charm of sun and shower  
Clothes the sward of grass and flower.

Sing of fields where cereal seas  
Wave before the harvest breeze,  
And of herds that wander far,  
Unhindered still with fence or bar,  
Where the upland meadows are.

Sing ye sons of poesy  
Of the season's surety;  
Of tired labor's full relief,  
Reward of windrow, cap and sheaf,  
Peace for pain, joy and grief.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita,  
Kansas, June 29, 1908, p. 8)

## See That Hump

(1908)

I've been sizing up the bunch  
As they gallop in for lunch  
    And go to roost in rows upon the stools;  
Some carelessly select a dish.  
Some are careful as you wish.  
    Some are wise and some, like us, are fools.  
Some seem not to care  
How they look or wear their hair,  
    And some there are whose looks are  
    never slack;  
But no matter where they meet,  
What they wear or how they eat—  
    They all have the hump upon their back.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita,  
Kansas, July 6, 1908, p. 3)

## A Day in May

(1908)

*(Subscribed to B. L. M.)*

The wind that swept the river's face  
    Could not have been more free,  
No bird that sang down mapled lane  
    More glad of heart than we.  
No fairy face could beam as bright  
    As yours with each surprise,  
No sea or sky could full reflect  
    The violet of your eyes.  
No miser's gold could half compare  
    With all my heart's rare treasure,  
No honey-bee could claim such sweets  
    As filled my cup full measure.  
And leaves may die and flowers fade,  
    And hills and vales turn gray,  
Wits grow dull and shoulders stoop  
    Ere we forget this day.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita,  
Kansas, July 9, 1908, p. 3)

## Memory

(1908)

When the swift sun hastens earthward,  
    And the twilight spreads her charms,  
And the dark comes down the star line  
    With dusky outstretched arms,  
When night falls prematurely,  
    And the winds thru' the trees complain,  
And the cold wan cheek of the mist  
    Is pressed 'gainst the window pane,  
When the silence is loud with waiting,  
    And courage and faith are lost,  
Through the halls at midnight, weeping,  
    Sad memory stalks like a ghost.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita,  
Kansas, July 10, 1908, p. 3)

## Luscomb's Grocery Store

(1908)

Joe Bing put on the boxin' gloves  
    With a professional of fame;  
Joe shut one eye and smashed his nose  
    An' sent him back home lame;  
To whip a hefty pugilist  
    Was just a little chore;  
Where did he fight? By the pickle bar'l  
    In Luscomb's grocery store.  
Bing's leg got broke in a run-away,  
    He went down with bad typhoid,  
Then he tuk the mumps an' got the dumps,  
    With an attack of viriloid;  
He had a siege of real la grippe,  
    They thought he wuz gone for shore;  
But he rallied, got well, an' now spins yarns  
    In Luscomb's grocery store.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita,  
Kansas, July 14, 1908, p. 3)

## Companionship (1908)

[Note exactly a poem, but some  
very poetic prose]

Oh, for a friend who will watch with me  
the changing color of winter skies, the  
glamour of August noons, the yellow glow of  
autumnal sunsets and the fading light on  
tawny hills where murmuring herds travel  
homeward half asleep with the languid  
melody of cricket choirs; one who will turn  
deaf ear to the twang of harps in banquet  
halls to listen to the laugh of children in  
shady groves, the pipe of killdeers by lazy  
streams, the trickle of hidden fountains in  
rocky ledges, the chatter of anxious parent  
birds o'er hungry brood, the whispered grief  
of belated butterflies in dying flowers, the  
sweep of pent-up rain on desert lands and  
the echo of thunder storms where granite  
pillars prop the everlasting hills against the  
sky! And so, I pray, send me such a friend!

(Published in the *Outdoor Life Magazine*, October,  
1908, p. 457)

## The Pasture Brook (1908)

Ah, well I know where the brook is born  
At the foot of the timbered ridge,  
And how it waits by the hazel wood  
And shoots beneath the bridge.

I know too, where the water is deep  
And where the shallows loudly roll;  
Where the silvery minnow wags his tail  
And the crayfish digs his hole.

For often when a child I've walked  
By the path that crossed its rill  
And paused its winding court to watch  
From the side of wooded hill.

Half-buried in the pebbly beach,  
Gleamed the bony turtle's shell,  
And the water lily blossomed white,  
Clapper in a verdant bell.

The dark eel swam in the mirrored pool  
Where the flags and rushes grew,  
And from the cowslip's tender cup  
The butterfly drank the dew.

Hid in the willows along the shore,  
All undisturbed by men,  
The red-capped black bird built its nest  
And the weasel peeped from his den.

Along the stem of the tall heartease,  
The lazy hopper crept,  
And from morn till night the croaking frogs  
Their fitful concert kept.

Often by the brook I've played  
Through many a summer day,  
And watched its restless current bear  
My tiny boat away.

And at night I've heard its waterfall  
Give out its solemn tune,  
While the hermit whip-poor-will  
Told his sorrow to the moon.

Yes, well I know where the brook flows on  
To the river around the bend,  
And I know too, how my life goes on—  
But I cannot tell the end.

(Published in the *Blackwell Daily News*, Blackwell,  
OK, Nov. 21, 1908, p. 4)

## **Kansas Limericks**

(1909)

There was a young lass at McCook,  
Who had a real innocent look,  
    She chewed gum and made eyes  
    And spoke low between sighs;  
And soon had ten beaux on the hook.

A milkman who lived at Sedgwick  
Kept his Jerseys too close to the creek  
    When high water came  
    Folks got onto his game  
And stopped his high water deal quick.

A thoughtless housewife at Moran  
Lit the fire with a Standard Oil can;  
    Now another fair face  
    Swings the can in her place  
And scolds at her patient old man.

A parson who lived at Mulvane  
Called a meeting to pray for a rain.  
    He put the tub under  
    The spout and by thunder  
The house cat was drowned in the drain.

There was an old man at Bartlay,  
Who chewed long green every day;  
    You may think it a yarn,  
    But he spat over a barn  
And extinguished a fire in some hay.

A spinster who lived at Norwich  
Grew as dry as an old sandwich;  
    She cut quite a caper  
    Put an ad in the paper;  
Got engaged and soon she wed rich.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita,  
Kansas, Mar. 13, 1909, p. 16)

## **The Play**

(1909)

“All the world’s a stage.” —Shakespeare  
In this strange game of give and take,  
    The players, all engaged,  
Seem to move unconsciously  
    Both young and middle aged.  
Today I love and you are cold,  
    My life is bowed with sorrow,  
A word, a look, the tables turn,  
    And your heart breaks tomorrow.  
But if women’s eyes were never wet,  
    Nor manly breasts were sighing,  
Life would not be worth the living,  
    Nor death be worth the dying.

(Published in *The Enid Daily Eagle*, Enid, OK,  
Mar. 11, 1909, p. 4)

## **The Mean Man.**

(1909)

He sent afar to Shear and Sawbuck  
    And traded until he was busted;  
Then turned to the merchants at home  
    In his distress to be trusted.  
He used a wart on the back of his neck  
    To fasten his celluloid collar;  
He stole a sick hen from a widow in town,  
    And sold his vote for a dollar.  
He borrowed the *Kansan* of his neighbor to read;  
    To charity never was giving,  
He lived on soup and finally died  
    To save the expense of living.

(Published in the *Newton Kansan*, Newton, Kansas,  
Mar. 18, 1909, p. 1)

## It Happened in Kansas.

(1909)

There was a poor man from Grenola  
Who struck a gas well at Iola;  
    It blew up so high  
    He punctured the sky  
And came down on a roof at Arcola.

There was a schoolmarm at Morton  
Who wished the spring term would shorten;  
    She avoided the rule  
    And dismissed the school.  
And the school board came up a snortin'.

There was a young fellow at Burton  
Who attempted to hang a new curtain;  
    He stood on a chair  
    And slipped and fell where  
The floor was not soft—that's for certain.

A fat man who lived at Toronto  
Got mad at his spaniel named Ponto;  
    He kicked at that pup  
    And his feet they flew up—  
'Twas a brick the fat man fell onto.

There was a young man at Udall  
Who took his best girl to a ball;  
    The floor was so slick  
    They both hit it quick—  
And somebody asked: "Did you fall?"

(Published in the *Independence Daily Reporter*,  
Independence, Kansas, Apr. 15, 1909, p. 5)

## Warming Up

(1909)

Now doth the festive dray horse shed  
    His coat of Ostermoor;  
The fragrant pole-cat goeth forth  
    To mix up with the air.

The green fly wakes and bats his eye  
    And fools around the stable;  
The red wasp spits upon his nest—  
    On the granary's gable.

The old cow wraps her pickled tongue  
    Around the rhubarb stalks;  
The spring calf gurgles for his dam  
    And wobbles as he walks.

The shanghai spreads upon her nest  
    Behind the coal house door;  
The farmer filching from her list—  
    Sells fresh eggs at the store.

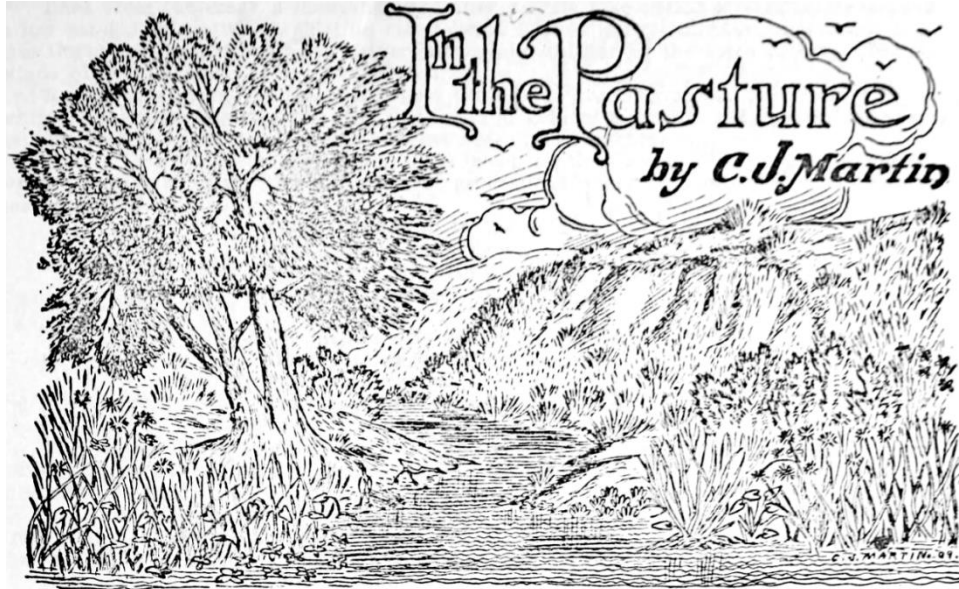
The pirate sparrow builds his nest—  
    Harbinger of bug and mite;  
The weeping-tom cat splits the air  
    Wide open in the night.

The smoke along the road proclaims  
    The camp fire of the bum;  
The bills for summer togs arrive—  
    I know that spring has come.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*,  
Wichita, Kansas, Apr. 20, 1909, p. 4)

[On next two pages: "In the Pasture" from  
*Kansas Magazine*, May 1909, p. 60–61,  
combining prose, poetry, and original  
artwork by Clarence J. Martin]





THE SUN has no sooner climbed high enough above the cottonwood trees along the road to pour its heat into the meadow than the locust begins to sing:

Dream, dream, dream,  
Where falls the stray sunbeam,  
Through the willows along the stream,  
Where soft eyed cattle drink,  
By the home of the snipe and the mink.

Sand Creek is a pretty stream and at this season of the year the water is so shallow that the turtles cannot hide their mossy skeletons and the minnows gather in startled groups in the eddies and dart in silver streaks from pool to pool.

The doves confidently build their nests in the leaning willows just above the water and red shouldered blackbirds quarrel all day with the indolent cattle loitering along the shores and

From somewhere in upper air  
Comes the sky-lark's song so rare.  
And in the grass as you pass  
The cricket pipes his noontime mass.

The killdeers wade in the shade  
By the rank bulrushes made;  
And bathe their feet by cresses sweet  
Where the carp and sunfish meet.

A purling brook too charming for the name of Mud Creek comes in from a grove a mile to the south and creeps timidly under the pasture fence. Then it wanders like a little child lost but not afraid, through the ironweed and vervain till it reaches the larger stream;

There it rests a moment on a sandbar warming in the sun, quivering with delight, then

The current slips with laughing lips.  
With its fleet of milkweed ships,  
On the tide, clear and wide,  
Where the water skippers glide.

And the swallows in the shallows  
Dip to see the ring that follows  
On the wave, o'er the cave  
Of the sunken mussel's grave.

*The Poetry of Clarence J. Martin*

Back from the creek a thousand yards lies a little lake curled affectionately around a low sand dune on whose shifting sides dwarf bushes grow clutching their roots deep into the soil to keep from being driven hither and thither by the force of the changing winds of early spring.

Around the marge of this little pool flags and rank grasses grow and in this whispering wilderness swarms of butterflies and golden banded bumble bees wage their happy warfare for the dewy sweets of heart's-ease and forget-me-not.

On its farther shore low-browed hills sleep in the summer sun with their rain-washed gullies showing like the claws of great lions keeping drowsy watch above the beauty of it all.

The bumbles roll in the goal  
Of the lily's waxen bowl,  
The dragon fly with glassy eye,  
Ogles at the passer by.

The bittern lifts and slowly drifts  
Along the ragged sandstone cliffs,  
The water rail wags his tail,  
And drags his feet across the swale.

The pasture lands are high and wide and stretch away so far that the listless herds feeding against the wind sometimes wander far away from the river bottom lands and the timber's shade.

Then they slowly turn and take the backward path and stream along the trails in dusty broken lines with here and there a straggler turning aside to pant a moment in the heat or to toss a pair of horns at a coyote or a hare.

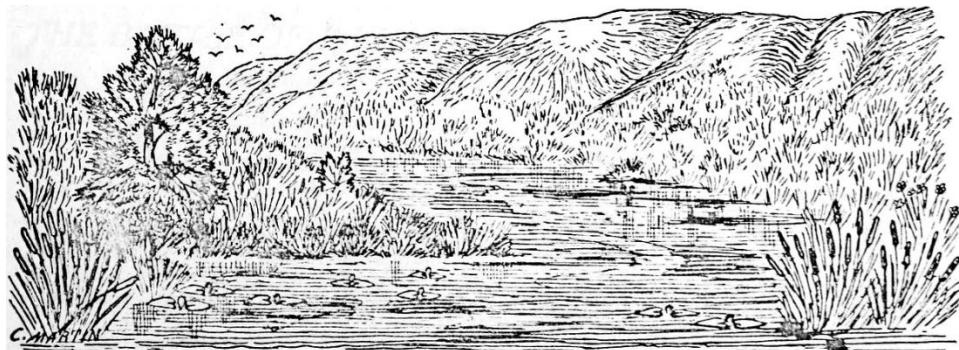
And when they reach the stream they sink ankle deep in the mire and with throbbing sides and slowly blinking eyes they drink long and do not raise their heads until their rounded forms declare they are filled, when they stop and sigh with rare content.

And if you suddenly break upon their solitude they lift their eyes and gaze a while in mute surprise and presently, if you do not move, they splash along the water's edge browsing as if they did not care.

After a while they group beneath the trees where the rain crow prophesies between the sunset and the dusk and when night comes and the moon throws his flash light on the water he finds them sleeping there mingling the sweet odor of their breath with the flower laden atmosphere.

The light bug swings on flaming wings,  
Where the cricket chorus sings.  
All night the air with praise and prayer  
Is rife, to all of those who care.

May all the sorrow that we borrow  
And the grief we dread tomorrow.  
Like the quiver on the river,  
Flash and disappear forever.



## **That Pokomoke**

(1909)

Born among the willows rank,  
Nursed 'mid grasses cool;  
It frolics on a sandy beach  
And circles in a pool.

Wavering thru indulgent fields,  
A lonesome child at play;  
A liquid smile in summer sun,  
Where listless minnows stray.

A place to cool the truant's feet,  
Where he trails with baited hook,  
Escaped from lash and slavery  
Of pencil, brush and book.

Undaunted by the city's taint  
Of foot and car and dray,  
It claims the debris of the street,  
An bears our stains away.

It bathes the feet of cottonwoods,  
Where orioles call at noon;  
It laughs a soft accompaniment  
To frogs beneath the moon.

It weeps for us who nurse our hate  
And love our petty strife;  
It whispers in repentant ears  
Forgiveness, love and life.

(Published in *The Kingman Journal*, Kingman,  
Kansas), Apr. 30 1909, p. 10)

## **Memorial, Vivace**

(1909)

'Tis right we should mourn our departed  
And pray by cypress and pine;  
'Tis meet we yield to feeling  
In oration and prose and rhyme.  
But the wrongs our heroes banished  
Lie buried with them in the dust;  
The cycle is ripe with new issues  
And face the conflict we must.

We may go forth with a trumpet;  
Return with a sob or a song;  
We may fight in tumult or silence,  
Alone, or in league with the strong,  
But we may not loiter with pleasure  
Nor watch the graves of our dead;  
The serpent has stung the woman's heel,  
And the foot is bruising his head.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*,  
Wichita, Kansas, May 31, 1909, p. 7)

## **August**

(1909)

'Tis August now, and summer sleeps  
Of age all unaware,  
While warm winds sift the pollen white  
Of corn fields, in her hair.

She sleeps, and on her full cheek burns  
The glow the sun shine wrought,  
And to her life the red stain clings,  
From fruits, the season brought.

She dreams—and in her vision moves  
The fullarmed reaper throng,  
And on her charmed ear falls the sound  
Of the happy harvest song.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*,  
Wichita, Kansas, Aug. 20, 1909, p. 3)

## **Silas Antique and the Pavement**

(1909)

[This was printed as continuous prose, but the rhyme scheme was obvious, and so it is rearranged here into lines and stanzas.]

Dod rot the pavement anyway!  
The bitulithic stuff;  
The blessed old dirt road  
Is plenty good enough.

Just rocks an' plaster everywhere,  
An' smoke an' beastly smells,  
An' engines snortin' through the streets  
With shouts an' bells an' yells.

I declar' when I cum in  
To town an' stay awhile,  
My bunions feel like carbuncles,  
My corn aches like a bile.

An' when I set my boot heels down  
It jars my entire frame;  
My teeth git loose, my eye balls ache,  
With bruises an I lame.

Every wagon rumbles loud;  
The hoofs of dray teams rattle,  
An' the minstrel show a marchin' by  
Sounds like a herd of cattle.

If I lived here an' had to walk  
The streets with town galoots,  
I'd mitigate the sound sumwhat  
By wearin' rubber boots.

An' sockery! the stuff is hot  
When the sun begins to shine;  
My face just burns an' tears cum in  
These old weak eyes of mine.

I'm longing for the good old times  
When we'd stand around and talk  
An spit tobacco anywhere  
'Thout mussin' up the walk.

(Published in *The Evening Kansan-Republican*,  
Newton, Kansas, June 25, 1909, p. 7)

## **Summer Heat**

(1909)

The passing wheel is silent with dust,  
And muffled the horse's hoof;  
The panting sparrow's weak complaint  
Falls from the glistening roof.

From signal tower the white flag hangs  
In motionless atmosphere;  
The gray sky arches the universe,  
And not a cloud is near.

The awning droops above the heads  
Of shoppers that linger and fret;  
The laborer halts upon his spade  
In mingled dust and sweat.

The morning-glory faints and clings  
To the sunflower's rugged stalk;  
The cricket circles and hops away  
From the hot suburban walk.

The river crawls o'er the thirsty sands  
With its burden of fallen leaves;  
A cat bird whines in yellowing vines  
Where the locust grieves and grieves.

(Published in *The Fort Scott Republican*, Fort  
Scott, Kansas, Aug. 27, 1909, p. 5)

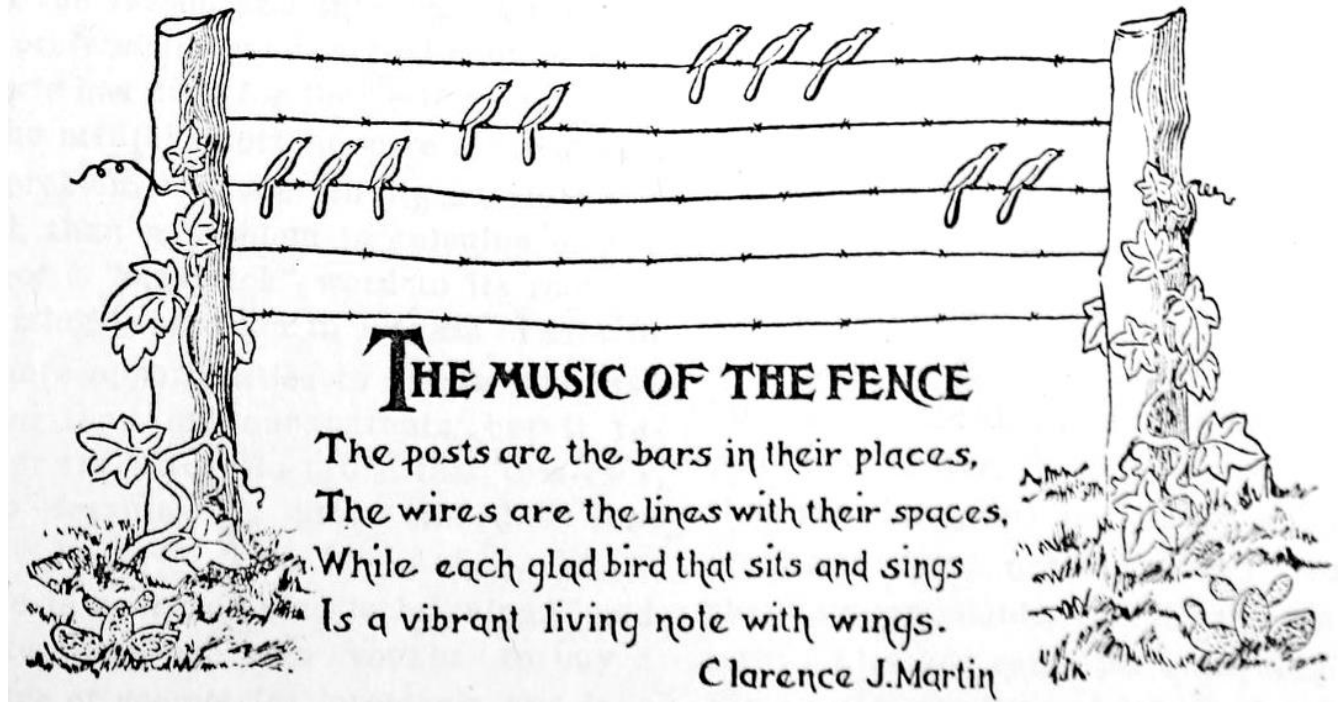
## **Sic Humani Generis**

(1909)

The One:—O, life is a trackless path  
Beset with mire and stone.  
(Tears, sighs, etc.)

The Other:—And we never would reach the  
goal  
Had we to travel alone.  
(Kisses—more kisses—)

(Published in *Kansas Magazine*, October 1909,  
p. 18)



(Published in Kansas Magazine, July 1909, p. 69)

## Sunflower Jingle

(1909)

A man living over at Burns  
Who trades with mail order concerns,  
Is oft in arrears  
And when broke, it appears,  
To home stores for credit he turns.

An Englishman hired at Beaumont,  
A horse for a cross country jaunt;  
When asked to be seated,  
He stood and repeated:  
"I wish that I could, but I cawn't."

An old lady who lives at DeGraff  
Has a neck by an Afric giraffe;  
When her throat grows sore  
She buys cloth a the store  
To wrap it, two yards and a half.

A bachelor who hails from Sedan  
Got a wife by the mail order plan;  
He married a vixen  
And now he is fixin'  
To jar loose in the courts if he can.

A fashionable maid at Elbing  
Bought a crow and a red parrot's wing  
For a soup bowl bonnet  
With a rooster tail on it  
And got at once in society's swing.

A miser who lived near Pontiac  
Dwelt alone thirty years in a shack;  
When he died not a tear  
Was shed by his bier,  
And the hearse trotted all the way back.

(Published in *The Alva Pioneer*, Alva, Oklahoma,  
Oct. 15, 1909, p. 8)

## **Autumnal Dark**

(1909)

The dust that choked the throat  
Of the hollyhock at noon  
Lay dew-wet by the road  
In the floodlight of the moon.

The powder-bodied moth  
Cruised the marigolds among,  
Throwing perfume from his wings  
Where the velvet spider swung.

The petal of the rose  
Shook with delicate delight  
As it caught the idle tear  
From the drowsy eye of night.

(Published in *Kansas Magazine*,  
November 1909, p. 13)

## **The Mother**

(1910)

I know a face as full of grace  
And divinely sweet with love complete  
As the face of her who, with eyes ablur,  
Bent and smiled above the Child,  
In the dim light of that holy night,  
Under the eaves at Bethany.

I know a breast so pure and blest,  
Moved with sighs at infant cries,  
And sanctified with tears undried,  
Where baby grief finds quick relief;  
And transient fears of childish years  
Are lost in a sea of sympathy.

A soul I know, as white as snow;  
Meek, yet strong to face the wrong;  
To passion closed, to lust opposed;  
A spotless dove awake to love  
And tenderness and fond caress;  
Maternal queen, faithful, serene,  
To thee I tune my symphony.

(Published in *Kansas Magazine*,  
January 1910, p. 52)

## **The Derelict**

(1910)

Descended from his father, Cain,  
His bent was to the bad;  
He chose the lot of pessimist,  
With melancholy clad.

In vain the lily blew for him;  
Tuneless the song of bird;  
Wordless alike the storm or calm—  
He neither saw nor heard.

He sought no love of wife or child,  
Companionship or cheer;  
His life was stranger to a smile;  
His eyelid knew no tear.

He took suspicion for a creed;  
He made compact with hell;  
To wag a sulphurous evil tongue  
When man or maiden fell.

He steeled his heart to unbelief;  
For doubt he spread a feast;  
He knew no bond, no brotherhood,  
He lived and died a beast.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita,  
Kansas, Feb. 12, 1910, p. 4)

## **Kansas Limericks**

(1910)

A farmer from near Miltonvale  
Bought a suit at a quit-business sale;  
He paid but four dollars  
And they threw in six collars,  
A graphophone and a tin milking pail.

A man living near Conway Springs  
With a love for convivial things,  
Gets a big jag on  
Rides home in a wagon,  
And not a cent to his family he brings.

A school boy who lives at Udall  
Drew his teacher's portrait on the wall.  
It was true in each feature,  
And the enraged teacher  
Laid on with no heed to his bawl.

A man who buys groceries at Peck  
Was hurt in a railroad wreck.  
He went in for loot  
And got by a suit  
Two thousand for a twist in his neck.

A settler living near Kiowa  
Had married a Kickapoo squaw;  
His offspring were brown  
And when folks turned him down  
He journeyed to far Arkansaw.

(Published in *The Price Current*, Wichita,  
Kansas, Feb. 26, 1910, p. 22)

## **Where Dorothy Lives**

(1910)

Where Dorothy lives—  
The snow lies cold and gray,  
And oft recurring storms  
Unhindered night and day  
Traverse the trackless fields  
Where winter holds full sway.

Where Dorothy lives—  
The dormant musk rat dreams  
In frozen domicile  
Of ice free lakes and streams  
Where black birds clack and cry  
And the water lily gleams.

Where Dorothy lives—  
The shivering herds lament  
And break with noisy hoof  
The frosty stalks low bent  
Where the wild hare crouches low  
In his snowy winter tent.

Where Dorothy lives—  
The ragged blue stem sways  
Under the stroke of the wind  
Out of the polar ways,  
And the faithless sunlight fails  
In the noon of cheerless days.

Where Dorothy lives—  
A lamp and lighted match;  
A white hand in the dusk  
At the window beneath the thatch;  
And my heart and feet have turned  
To her welcome and lifted latch.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita,  
Kansas, Mar. 19, 1910, p. 20)

## **The Cricket**

(1910)

Conductor of the meadow choir,  
I count his song not harsh;  
His treble fills the pasture lands  
And rings by swale and marsh.  
Where rank weeds line the dusty road  
I mark his wayward trail  
To the soiled burdock leaf  
That forms his shelter, frail.  
With arms akimbo now he clings  
To the waving red top stem  
And leads the clamorous insect throng  
That swells the summer hymn.  
Optimist of neglected fields,  
Bereft of seed and share;  
Where man, the profligate, has failed  
He pipes his harvest there.  
He hides in clefts of crumbling stone  
That marks the great man's grave;  
And breathes his simple prayer alike  
For pauper, priest and knave.  
While beetles waver through the dusk  
And worship candles bright,  
He sings in leafy temple lit  
With moon and pale star light.  
He knows the power of sun and rain;  
The joy of land and stream;  
He is the bold interpreter  
That tells the poet's dream.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita,  
Kansas, June 10, 1910, p. 16)

## **The Graduate's Return**

(1910)

A dim light shines on classic shrines  
And summits old with learning;  
I've said my parts and now my heart's  
Where Mother does the churning.  
I want to come and hear the hum  
Of the old separator.  
And hold my tin beneath the chin  
Of its metal agitator.  
Its crank I've turned the while I yearned  
To imbibe from that fountain;  
The times I drank out of its tank  
There is no use o' countin'.  
Ah, well I know its creamy flow  
Excels old wine or sherbet;  
Tonight, I think that I could drink  
At least as much as Herbert.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita,  
Kansas, June 30, 1910, p. 12)

## **A Wish**

Oh, for ten years  
Crowded into one  
With decade days  
Without a setting sun;  
Or else to stop the flow  
Of tide and time  
Till we can fill the world  
With song and rhyme.

(Published in *Kansas Magazine*,  
August 1910, p. 55)



## Melancholia

(1910)

Man will build him shrines of clay,  
Bow down and worship ardently;  
They fall, he weeps or blindly frets  
A day, a year, and then forgets.

And maidenhood will crave a kiss,  
Give honor name and all for this,  
Until the fire of a passion dies,  
Then stop her ears at infant cries.

On treasure, youth, will lose his hold,  
And age will hug his slippery gold;  
Mirth with folly will make her bed  
And grief disturb her sleeping dead.

Honor guards his clouded name  
And limps upon his crutch of fame;  
Virtue claims her meagre wage  
And hides the gray hairs of her age.

Fate, making puppet man her tool,  
Makes poor the wise and rich the fool;  
For the parents sin a curse is given;  
Obscure and hard the way to heaven.

The infant's cry, the school girl's pout,  
The sage's prayer, the jester's shout  
Have served to fill the fevered span  
Since out of chaos came a man.

Iron is a tonic for the heat  
As well as tires for a funeral cart;  
Then, let us who rejoice or sigh,  
Arise and eat, lie down and die.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita,  
Kansas, July 4, 1910, p. 4)

## The Northern Summer

(1910)

The summer showers have left the fields  
Rich with all the Nature yields,  
And at her shrine the poet kneels.

He loathes the city street and dome,  
He knows the ground-birds' humble home  
In pasture lands where cattle roam.

He marks the voyage of the bee  
Across the waving perfumed sea  
Of clover heads and timothy.

The butterfly with velvet wing  
Wavers like a wounded thing  
In milk-weed bloom where crickets sing.

Hard by where the hill-road winds,  
On creeping things the bob-white dines  
And scrambles through the glory-vines.

Fades at morn the tardy moon,  
And in the torpid afternoon  
The lazy locust strikes his tune.

Down the lanes the sunflowers nod,  
And in the powdery golden rod  
The bumble quarrels with his load.

Mid scented hay shocks newly made,  
Cloud shadows linger as afraid,  
And fleck the fields with transient shade.

This wealth of wood and field and flowers,  
Day and night and sun and showers,  
With God's companionship is ours.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita,  
Kansas, Sep. 3, 1910, p. 16)

## **The Drought (A Reminiscence)**

(1910)

The hot sun poured his livid fire  
Upon the parched plain;  
The prostrate hills in mute appeal  
Begged the skies for rain.  
The dusty road writhed in the heat,  
The steaming creeks ran dry;  
The red lips of the gullies cracked  
Beneath the moulten sky.

The corn blades rattled in the wind,  
That tossed the dust cloud high,  
The ground-bird panted in the heat  
And watched her fledglings die.  
The starving bees in withered flowers  
Searched for sweets in vain;  
The spider clung with empty hands  
Unto his ragged skein.

The cattle tramped with heated hoofs  
Around the sunken springs;  
The vulture watched with craven eye  
Low poised on balanced wings.  
The thirsty coyote sought the stream  
Hot-tongued upon the way;  
The famished serpent charmed the hare  
But could not take his prey.

The locust's song faltered and died  
In the burning hush of noon;  
The light-bug fanned his faded torch  
Beneath the yellow moon.  
And hill and plain and field and wood  
Travailed and groaned in pain,  
And day and night beneath the scourge,  
Cried out to God for rain.

(Published in *Kansas Magazine*,  
September 1910, p. 30)

## **A Song**

(1910)

Bless our God for the golden rod,  
Marvelous growth of a marvelous sod;  
Product of the richest soil  
That ever responded to the toil  
Of rugged men with sturdy arms.

Oh yes, bless Him for the light house stem  
Crowned with a fragrant diadem,  
Where the butterfly ship with yellow sail  
Tacks and steers in the summer gale  
'Cross verdant seas on fertile farms.

And bless Him, too for heat and dew,  
For seasons change the glad year through  
Where mighty wheat fields wave and nod,  
Fenced with the ranks of golden rod,  
That stirs the spirit with its charms.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita, Kansas,  
Sep. 6, 1910, p. 6)

## **The Autumn Ride**

(1910)

The bob white strode across the road  
Along the upland level;  
The milk pods ghost by every post  
Haunted the turn pike bevel.

The gray hawk swooped where iron weeds  
drooped  
With autumn's early warning;  
The locust weaved in grass dead leaved  
His song begun at morning.

The whole land lay beneath the ray  
Of the red sun's slow declining;  
The breeze that swept the brown hills wept  
With Nature's sweet repining.

How blest are they who love the way  
That leads by field and river;  
The city wall will age and fall  
But these will live forever.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita, Kansas,  
Sep. 7, 1910, p. 5)

## **The Cub**

(1910)

He tumbles out at early dawn  
And rubs his heavy blinkers;  
He passes up the swell café  
And turns to pie and sinkers.  
He whistles down the empty street  
To dissipate the blues;  
He sharps his faber to a point  
And breathes a prayer for news.  
He knows no bar of privacy  
In sunshine or the dark;  
Up, across, around he roves,  
A walking question mark.  
He circulates in shop and home,  
He'll find you soon or late;  
"I want to know," his slogan is,  
His creed, "Investigate."  
He knows the text at Sunday school;  
He joins hands at the dance;  
He rides the wild police patrol  
And chases the ambulance.  
He has no fear of smoke and flame;  
In wrecks he piles the dead;  
He interviews the candidate,  
And haunts the sick man's bed.  
He knows the habitat of youth;  
The old he patronizes;  
He autos with the plutocrat;  
With the poor he sympathizes.  
He walks the halls of high finance,  
Where move big salaried men;  
He does his work for fifteen per  
And sometimes twelve—or ten.  
The idle presses wait his dope  
From 'Frisco to the Hub;  
For smallpox we can vaccinate  
But we have to have the cub.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita,  
Kansas, Sep. 12, 1910, p. 12)

## **The Morning Glory**

(1910)

Last child of the falling year,  
That dying, gives thee birth;  
Leaving her offspring on the breast  
Of kindly mother, earth.  
Ragged orphan, lone in the field,  
When other flowers are dead,  
Lost in the tangle of tumbleweeds  
Where the field-mouse makes his bed.  
Idle truant, wandering far,  
Where woodland shadows lie;  
From roadside, thickets, timidly,  
Peering at passers by.  
Night reveler in withered corn,  
In confidence, overbold;  
Sporting in frosty atmosphere  
With wan face blue with cold.  
City dweller, undismayed,  
Mid smoke and grime and rust,  
Greeting the morn with dew-washed eyes  
In alley cursed with dust.  
Love lorn patron of the stars;  
Gazing all the night,  
Skyward, to thy distant gods  
That fade with morning light.  
Prophet of a royal line;  
Last of the season's hope;  
With message of a life beyond  
Life's narrow horoscope.

(Published in *The Ottawa Herald*, Ottawa,  
Kansas, Oct. 20, 1910, p. 3)

## Melancholy Days

(1910)

The meloncholic days are gone,  
The saddest of the year;  
We've paid the nurse and doctors' bills;  
Our Willie still is here.

Heaped in the alleys of the town,  
The autumn leaves lie dead;  
They rustle as the country guest  
Leaves town with hurried tread;

Gone, the toothsome ice cream cone;  
Limade will no more pay,  
While shouts the hot tamale man  
Through all the gloomy day.

Where are the rhymes, the blithesome rhymes,  
That lately stirred our blood,  
While courting the elusive muse  
In the shady wood.

Alas! They all are sacrificed,  
The literary flowers  
Are lying in the basket where  
The stern proof reader lowers.

Our tears are falling where they lie,  
A sympathetic rain,  
For the children of our wavering pen  
Will ne'er see type again.

And now, when comes November days,  
Still those days must come,  
To call the moth ball and the fur  
From out their winter home;

When the meter clicks a merry tune,  
Though the gas is low and still,  
And comes the grocer with delight,  
Bringing his little bill.

The voter searches for the hat  
And tie he lately wore  
And sighs to find them at the polls  
And where he fought no more.

(Published in *The Ottawa Herald*, Ottawa, Kansas,  
Nov. 10, 1910, p. 3)

## The Defeated Candidate

(1910)

Surely now, someone has made  
A most stupendous blunder,  
For as of the last precinct reports  
I'm snowed completely under.

I've mixed among the city chaps;  
I've viewed the farmers' shotes;  
I've kissed the kids and praised the wives,  
But my opponent has the votes.

I left my business to the clerks,  
And chartered motor cars,  
To scatter campaign literature  
And high stinkadore cigars.

I've burned the smoky midnight oil,  
And practiced on my speech,  
Till neighbors moved away because  
They could not bear my screech.

With waving arms upon the street  
I preached my fondest hopes,  
But in the late official count  
They "knocked me through the ropes."

But I made a lot of bully friends  
Shaking hands with all I met;  
I'll run a chicken farm awhile,  
And I'll land that office yet!

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita, Kansas,  
Nov. 9, 1910, p. 9)

## **Jack, On Christmas**

(1910)

I don't know, but say, gee whiz,  
There's somethin' 'bout this Christmas biz  
That's mighty hard to understand.  
At gittin' up time most usually  
To git me out my mama, she,  
Has to pull and yank at me,  
And scold and jaw to beat the band.

But Christmas time its jes' like play;  
I wake a long time 'fore its day;  
I think daylite will never cum;  
The house is big and dark and still;  
I try to sleep, but am 'fraid I will;  
Then I hear somethin' at the window sill,  
And I cover up my head, by gum!

I heard a noise at my room door,  
Sakes, you know, old Santa swore!  
And such a natural human grunt;  
I guess he must a struck a tack.  
He said dern or my name aint Jack.  
I'll fight before I'll take it back.  
I ain't big but I'm no runt.

I'll tell you 'bout this Santa Claus  
He's wherever there is pas and mas,  
Ats what my teacher sed at school;  
I wish 'twas so, but geemunee,  
He can't cum down the chimblee,  
And git back with his pack, you see.  
I hang my sock but I'm no fule.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita,  
Kansas, Dec. 27, 1910, p. 5)

## **May Time**

(1911)

Come with me where wide fields blur  
With sun, and meadows wake and stir  
From winter sleep to grass and flowers;  
Where glad surprise of midnight showers  
O'ertakes the drowsy morning hours.

The skylark wooed by cloud caps gray  
Explores the air at early day,  
And young hares creep in tender green  
Where blossoming branches sway and lean  
And sun lit spaces intervene.

The dull frog tells his idle dream  
Where minnows waver in mid-stream,  
And cattle, thin with winter fare,  
Scenting the green on warmer air,  
Graze rich hills and loiter there.

Spring whispers to the listening earth;  
The secret of her joy and mirth,  
And entranced with the earth's replies,  
Wanders far with laughing eyes,  
Sowing the air with butterflies  
Down lanes that lead to Paradise.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita,  
Kansas, May 2, 1911, p. 12)

## Consistency

(1911)

My neighbor plays the violin,  
And I play the guitar,  
But if he doesn't quit his fiddling  
There's going to be a war.

He breaks my noon siesta  
And gives my nerves a jar.  
I'd break his head, but then—  
I play the guitar.

Confound that fiddle anyhow,  
It makes me want to swear;  
The rasping, screeching thing,  
Not soft like the guitar.

At night when I court sleep,  
Dreaming of lands afar,  
It splits the air wide open,  
But I play the guitar.

When we have company,  
By train or motor car,  
My neighbor sees the fiddle,  
And I thump the guitar.

I really shall do something;  
He must stop I declare;  
I expect he'll quit the fiddle  
When I quit the guitar.

I had him arrested  
And placed behind the bar;  
But the police also got me  
And my soft toned guitar.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita,  
Kansas, Sep. 26, 1911, p. 3)

## Indian Summer

(1911)

Take one last look upon the summer fields,  
And hark the farewell whistle of the quail,  
For Indian summer by her brown tepee  
Lights her ruddy fire beside the trail.

Cone capped acorns hang in silent woods  
That rustle to the labor of the squirrel,  
And red birds dart in feather flame  
In leafy winds of amethyst and beryl.

The sky lark drifting on the autumn wind  
Leaves his empty nest upon the plains,  
And cattle grazing close on barren hills  
Low their discontent in chilling rains.

The faded yellow of the last sunflower,  
Glowing a somber gem in leafy brown,  
Where morning glories creep in withered weeds  
And bloom in white and crimson near the  
ground.

The cricket moved to song by mid-day sun  
Sings in monotone at evening chill,  
And circling wild fowl chatter in the air  
Seeking the misty lake behind the hill.

Take one last walk down shaded lanes;  
Pluck one more aster, faded, pale;  
For Indian summer by her brown tepee  
Fans her ruddy fire beside the trail.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita,  
Kansas, Oct. 2, 1911, p. 12)

## **Contrary Seasons** (1912)

In summer time with heat oppressed  
The poet sang with cheerful whang  
Of kindly Autumn's cool and rest.  
Autumn burst with heat and dust  
And knocked his rhythm east and west.

In autumn days through every week  
To care immune he piped his tune  
Of swan like winter calm and meek;  
Winter, bleak bound up the creek,  
Cuffed the poet and froze his cheek.

In winter on the icy street,  
He prophesied that Spring would glide  
Into the arena mild and sweet;  
April, replete with snow and sleet  
Swept the poet off his feet.

Through frost bit May meadows bare  
Mocked his rhyme of summer time;  
June sunstroke caught him unaware;  
Adieu to care, on the golden stair,  
He's singing still, up there, somewhere.

(Published in *The Evening Herald*, Ottawa, Kansas,  
Apr. 4, 1912, p. 3)

## **The Grippe** (1912)

You may be now enjoying health,  
And feeling mighty flip;  
But in the coming winter time  
Prepare to have the grip.

An invader from a foreign strand,  
It sails upon the breeze,  
And when it lands upon your shore  
You salute it with a sneeze.

Your wife retreats, the children fly,  
The house cat seeks the shed;  
You are too weak to sit or walk,  
And too mad to go to bed.

You open the door to cool your brow,  
You shut it ere you're froze;  
You could operate a water wheel  
With the torrent from your nose.

You call the family doctor out,  
Who comes with smile benign  
And charges you two bones per trip,  
Including the quinine.

By day the sunlight turns to milk,  
Each night the moon to cheese;  
Sleeping, you dream of crocodiles,  
Your head's a hive of bees.

Your spine creeps like a garter snake,  
Your teeth are oxidized;  
You hunt your life insurance up,  
You swear you're paralyzed.

And ambling back again to life,  
While joint and muscle squeaks,  
When you get clean over it  
You have it yet three weeks.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita,  
Kansas, Dec. 4, 1912, p. 12)

## **The Fly in the Ointment** (1913)

There's a dead fly in the ointment,  
And with this thought in view,  
We wish to gain your patience  
While we frankly say to you,

We enjoy the moving pictures,  
And we would more often go  
If we did not have to listen  
To the electric piano.

We love the Sunday service,  
And we would not quickly tire  
If we did not have to witness  
The spasms of the choir.

We like to go to weddings,  
But wings our pleasures take  
As we can the oyster dressing  
And the alabaster cake.

We endure the hotel table  
And could learn to like it well  
If they would dynamite the kitchen  
And eliminate its smell.

We like to hear the phonograph,  
For tone it has no match,  
But it mars the strains of Lohengrin  
With its aggravating scratch.

We tolerate the street car  
And would like to ride it more  
If the hog of human species  
Would not spit upon the floor.

All praise we give to laying hens,  
Their fruit we gladly tackle,  
But we'd eat their product more  
If they forgot to cackle.

We like the neighbor on our street,  
He cheers life's weary jog,  
But he keeps a flock of moulting hens  
And a worthless old bull dog.

Yea, we like the festive poet,  
Though he ne'er lends us dimes.  
We would indulge his preachments  
If he'd just cut out the rhymes.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita,  
Kansas, Jan. 6, 1913, p. 8)

## **The Violin** (1913)

(Inscribed to Prof. Harry Ryan)

Conceived in the virgin wood;  
Formed in the heart of the tree;  
Shine, rain, calm and storm  
Find voice in my harmony.

Shaped by the hand of love,  
I am one with the poet race;  
Subdued in melody and tone,  
With tears from the master's face.

I sob in the beggar's hand,  
As the soulless rich go by;  
I plead in judgment halls  
For sinners doomed to die.

I sing in riots of fame,  
Where revelers drink full deep;  
I cheer the lonely pioneer  
Where winds of the desert sweep.

I murmur in gardens fair,  
Where heart-sick lovers sigh;  
I teach men how to fight and live,  
And women to love and die.

I march with war and death,  
Where shattered armies drift;  
I witness men and nations fade  
And comfort the remnant left.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita,  
Kansas, May 17, 1913, p. 51)



## **The Sunday Bungle** (1913)

[This was submitted as a letter to the editor and was set as continuous text, but the rhyme scheme was obvious, and so it is rearranged here into lines and stanzas.]

I once read the Sunday Bungle and I took it by the year,  
But I'll whisper a small secret if you'll kindly lend your ear.  
I'm getting tired of reading the fiction of the Quacks,  
As I scan the advertising in search of useful facts.

I am not interested in nostrums, dope and pills  
And a yard of testimonials about disgusting ills.  
One man from Crazy City sells "gets it" for my feet  
And one will send confection to make my rank breath sweet.

The celebrated Doctor Horsey begs me not to operate;  
For pimples and hot flashes he makes a special rate.  
I am asked to mail my symptoms to a certain Doctor Slap,  
Who will cure me of plethora if I'll step into his trap.

Folks all read his symptoms with a neurasthenian chill,  
Then they send the Doc a fiver for a bucket of his swill.  
Doctor Swartz will mend the liver with a capsule of great size;  
Professor Scalpem knocks lumbago with a lotion for the eyes.

Fat will vanish by the gallon if I take the double stuff;  
Spend one penney, is the slogan, just one treatment is enough.  
Sagging cheeks and baggy eyelids, black heads, pimples get the hook;  
Moles and birth marks quickly vanish if I send a stamp for a book.

"Every woman," "ask your druggist," "you will marvel" with surprise  
When your faded hair stops falling and your bust regains its size.  
It's a joy to take Hospitalers; teeth extracted without pain;  
Doctor Squires will cure—no cutting, or all your money back again.

Yes I've read the Sunday Bungle, and my mind is fully set;  
I want less sensation so I'll take the Police Gazette.

(Published in *The Wichita Beacon*, Wichita, Kansas, June 26, 1913, p. 12)

## The Town Knocker

(1913)

(Isaiah 30:11. Get you out of the way, turn ye aside out of the path.)

Why do you knock on your village  
And stand on the corner and sputter  
And howl like an overgrown kid  
Bereft of his corn pone and butter?  
Though the hot wind dry up the kaffir  
And the hopper devour the baled hay,  
Why should you quarrel with the neighbors  
And blockade the highway and bray?  
The man who works does not orate.  
He plows up the garden and plants;  
Only one "patch" owns the loafer,  
'Tis the plot on the seat of his pants.  
No faith had Simon the Simple,  
Who fished in the depths of a pail;  
When Noah expected a minnow  
The Lord provided a whale.  
No man in the town can beat you,  
If you grumble you'll do it yourself;  
If you view all men with suspicion  
They'll place your remains on the shelf.  
There's an army of diligent fellows  
Who want the use of the street,  
So go help your wife with the washing  
And stop your pestiferous bleat.

(Published in *The Dodge City Daily Globe*,  
Dodge City, Kansas, Sep. 3, 1913, p. 2

## Don't Change Your Church

(1915)

We urge the sinners, everyone,  
To make the great confession;  
And when they have it fitly made  
We claim them our possession.  
We feed them in our churchly fold  
Our own peculiar hay;  
And mark them with our branding iron  
That none may get away.  
We bid them take our sacrament,  
And have them well baptized,  
According to the "only mode"  
And have them catechized.  
We warn them not to break the law  
Of the ritualistic school;  
We have them lisp the litany  
If they smash the golden rule.  
We teach them that the other church  
Which stands across the way,  
Is wrong; its members in the dark,  
Will never see the day.  
We bless them loudly when they join  
Our own denomination;  
We have them damned eternally  
If they change their church relation.  
A man can join a dozen clubs  
And lodges by the score,  
But if you leave the mother church  
You'll miss the golden shore.  
You can rob an orphan's home;  
You can filch a car of wheat;  
If you keep your pew rent paid  
You may still retain your seat.  
You can steal a widow's house and lot  
Without a passing exclamation;  
But to tamper with your creed  
Means ex-communication.  
Beads and biscuits, rites and forms,  
Supplant the Christian spirit;  
And while we shout "Millennium!"  
We are getting nowhere near it.

(Published in *The Brainerd Daily Dispatch*,  
Brainerd, Minnesota, July 30, 1915, p. 3)

# The Converted Pacifist

(1917)

[This was printed as continuous prose,  
but the rhyme scheme was obvious,  
and so it is rearranged here into lines  
and stanzas.]

I was the chief of pacifists  
    But now I stand up for my right;  
I don't like to go to war  
    But I'm ready for a fight.

I tried to tend my tater patch  
    And always live in peace,  
But I find the war on tater bugs  
    Is never going to cease.

I tried to mind my business  
    And exercise good sense,  
But I whacked my neighbor on the bean  
    When his cows broke down my fence.

A low down cur poisoned my dog  
    And killed my best house cat,  
And so I hit him with a brick  
    And broke his leg for that.

I met a speed fiend on the road  
    And gave him half the track,  
But he knocked my jitney from the grade  
    And almost broke my back;

I rose up in my righteous wrath  
    And smote him on the cheek;  
I raised a door knob on his dome  
    And threw him in the creek.

I loaned a saw-buck to a man  
    And he came and stole my saw,  
So I hit him with a cord of wood;  
    I guess I broke his jaw.

I left my cellar door unlocked  
    And lost my winter's meat;  
I chased the man who stole my hams  
    And with him mopped the streets.

I gave a dollar to a tramp;  
    That night he stole my clothes;  
Now he leans upon a crutch  
    And wobbles as he goes.

I went to hear a pacifist  
    Who said we'd fight no more;  
Someone hit him with a turnip  
    And threw him out the door.

There are cut worms in the cabbage  
    And insects on the peas;  
The hens are fighting mites  
    And the dogs are fighting fleas.

The world is split with earth quakes,  
    The sky has "shooting" stars,  
And whoever gets to Heaven  
    Will pay taxes unto Mars.

(Published in *The Shattuck Monitor*, Shattuck,  
Oklahoma, Oct. 18, 1917, p. 1)

## Untitled poem

(1917)

[This was printed as continuous prose, but the rhyme scheme was obvious, and so it is rearranged here into lines and stanzas.]

There was a man who said  
That he didn't give a darn  
How high the weeds grew on his lot  
And stood around his barn.

"I own my yard," said he,  
With quite a show of spunk;  
And so he let it grow to thorns  
And clutter up with junk.

For garden truck he had no room;  
He turned his chickens loose;  
His milk cow foraged in the streets  
Till the neighbors raised the deuce.

His unoiled windmill shrieked all day;  
His fence was broken down;  
He dumped his garbage in the road  
And the odor filled the town.

He built no sidewalk past his gate;  
He dodged the city tax;  
He gave no dime to charity  
And about the church was lax.

But all the neighbors passed him by  
And quit trading at his store;  
The children snubbed him in the street.  
Gee, but it made him sore!

He was black balled in the lodge,  
He had to leave the church;  
His mother-in-law went back on him;  
The banks left him in the lurch.

He took sick at last, the doctor came,  
But no medicine he gave;  
He died, and when they buried him  
They placed a jimpson on his grave.

(Originally published in *The Wichita Beacon* (date unknown) and reprinted in *The Shattuck Monitor*, Shattuck, Oklahoma, Nov. 1, 1917, p. 1)

## The Road Overseer

(1918)

[This was printed as continuous prose, but the rhyme scheme was obvious, and so it is rearranged here into lines and stanzas.]

The overseer hies him out  
To view the county road,  
Where the tourist honks his super-six  
And the farmer hauls his load.

Says he "This highway is a fright,  
And though the township's in arrears,  
I'll call my bully road gang out  
And make some big repairs."

So he runs a tractor fourteen miles  
Along the county line;  
He drives a steamplow down the hills  
And up the steep incline.

He leaves a frog pond in the place  
Where a culvert ought to be,  
And just beyond the county bridge  
You cross the Caspian Sea.

A Colorado canyon yawns along  
The road on either side;  
You shoot a dozen "shute the shutes"  
As down the hill you glide.

There's an Indian grave yard in the lane;  
An excavation on the grade;  
You cross the bottom lands on "low"  
To travel you're afraid.

[Remainder of text lost in the page gutter.]

(Published in *The Daily Oklahoman*, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Aug. 4, 1918, p. 10)

## **To The Tourist**

(1939)

You may not like our fruits and yams,  
Our leaping fish, our sleeping clams,  
Though mocking birds may tire your ears,  
The ragged palms move you to tears,  
Still you must like our climate!

You may denounce our hotdog stands,  
Bewail our sub-divided lands,  
Refuse to see our movie shows  
And at our schools turn up your nose,  
But surely you like our climate!

You may decline our mountain hikes,  
Close your ears to bawling “mikes,”  
Lament our picket lines and strikes,  
Drive forty miles for parking space  
And fail to find it any place,  
But please endorse our climate!

Although you dislike Hollywood,  
Calling each movie star a dud,  
Though you fail to trace the road that winds  
And lose your way mid highway signs,  
Say a good word for our climate!

When you return where you were born,  
Mayhap to lands of wheat and corn,  
Among the neighbors where you dwell  
Get on a box, let out a yell,  
And tell about our climate!

You'll find the same attractions here  
When you come back to us next year  
With bulging eyes and craning necks;  
P.S.—bring cash or travelers checks.

(Published in Wilmington Daily Press Journal,  
Wilmington, California, July 24, 1939, p. 3)

## **Hirsute Hysteria**

(1939)

Shade of Dante, look upon us!  
We must have drifted far,  
Among our fellow townsmen  
We know not who we are.

Ben Franklin sells us groceries,  
Eli Whitney sells our collars,  
When we deposit at the bank  
General Sherman takes our dollars.

Horace Greeley runs the paper,  
James A. Garfield sells us drugs,  
Abe Lincoln handles hardware,  
Thomas Edison sells us rugs.

Teddy Roosevelt measures lumber,  
Old Ben Butler deals us hash,  
When we pay our monthly gas bill  
J. Ham Lewis takes our cash.

Bill Shakespeare is our doctor,  
James Whitcomb sells us chops,  
George Washington is our lawyer,  
Robert Lee picks up our slops.

Henry Ward Beecher is the painter,  
John L. Sullivan's mending sinks,  
Poet Shelley does the plumbing,  
Billy Sunday mixes drinks.

Robert Burns works on our jitney,  
Al Capone mends our clothes,  
David Livingston punches tickets  
Where the rattling street car goes.

This Rip Van Winkle nightmare  
May yet ruin our lies,  
Our own children may not know us,  
We may be rejected by our wives.

But in spite of all confusion  
We maintain our personnel,  
Before we'll wear your whiskers  
We'll see you all in — well!

(Published in Wilmington Daily Press Journal,  
Wilmington, California, July 28, 1939, p. 1)

# **The Beard Song**

(1939)

Tune—(The Old Oaken Bucket)

O how dear to our hearts are the beards of our childhood  
As sad recollection presents them to view,  
Each stubble-grown face resembling a wildwood  
And every rough chin which our infancy knew,  
The Vandyke of our father, side burns that grow nigh it,  
The brush of the banker we thought was so swell,  
The wide-spreading mat of the genial old sciot  
Who pummeled our livers when we were not well.

Refrain:

O the old-fashioned whiskers,  
Our ancestors' friskers,  
The goatees and horse tails  
We remember so well.

O the old-fashioned beardlets we never should treasure,  
For often at noon when returned from the field  
While quenching our thirst they gave us no pleasure,  
Ten million bacteria the whiskers would yield;  
When ardent we seized it with hands that were glowing,  
Deep down in green mosses the old bucket fell,  
And soon with the spawn of malaria flowing  
And dripping with poison it rose from the well.

O the old-fashioned whiskers,  
The weather-tanned friskers,  
The ragged old fox tails  
We drained at the well.

No more at the green mossy brim we'll receive it,  
The old "soaken" bucket inclined to our lips,  
To the files of antiquity gladly we leave it  
And resort to the fountain of sodas and flips;  
As now to the faucet we go for libation  
The tear of remorse will intrusively swell  
As horror reverts to the old habitation  
Where they parted their whiskers and drank from the well.

O the old oaken bucket,  
The rusty old junket  
That dipped up the tadpoles  
That swam in the well.

(Published in *Wilmington Daily Press Journal*, Wilmington,  
California, Aug. 17, 1939, p. 1)

# **The Skeeter**

**(1940)**

[This was printed as continuous prose,  
but the rhyme scheme was obvious,  
and so it is rearranged here into lines  
and stanzas.]

The pesky skeeter has a song  
    But no music in his soul;  
He loves a bare pink shoulder  
    And a stocking with a hole.

He has a flair for human frames,  
    Legs, arms and faces;  
He likes the crowds in picnic grounds  
    And other shady places.

When he joins a party,  
    He asks no invitation,  
He comes in unannounced  
    And spreads consternation.

And though you slap him vigorously  
    When you know he's near you,  
You hear his buzz around your ears  
    And know he does not fear you.

He squints his eye along a row  
    Of unprotected shanks.  
He drills postholes on soft white arms  
    And hums his meager thanks.

And sometimes when you think he's gone  
    He perches on your neck  
And sends a thrill along your spine  
    And bites like sin, by heck!

And when you aim deliberately,  
    Thinking at last you've got him,  
You relax your vengeful fist  
    And he isn't there, dod rot him!

Oh when Noah filled the ark  
    With every kind of creature,  
Why did he not leave the skeeter pest  
    Outside the scheme of Nature?

(Published in *Wilmington Daily Press Journal*,  
Wilmington, California, July 17, 1940, p. 3)