



FRANK BERNARD CAMP

Collected Poems

CRITICAL READING EDITION

EXTREMES AND MODERATIONS:
EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

Collected Poems

Frank Bernard Camp

1882–after 1949

Critical Reading Edition

Edited by Brian Kim Stefans

Extremes and Moderations

EXTREMES AND MODERATIONS: EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

EDITORIAL AND RIGHTS NOTE

This critical reading edition resets 116 distinct poems from the complete texts of *Mexican Border Ballads* (1916), *American Soldier Ballads* (1917), *Rhymes in Khaki* (1918), and *Alaska Nuggets* (1921). It is not a facsimile. The original scans govern wording, order, lineation, stanza divisions, subtitles, notes, capitalization, and indentation. Five later printings of poems already included are recorded as witnesses rather than repeated.

All four source books are in the United States public domain. New editorial apparatus and cover design © 2026 Brian Kim Stefans / Extremes and Moderations. The historical source scans, selected archival images, cover production files, structured text, and research downloads are preserved in the production archive.

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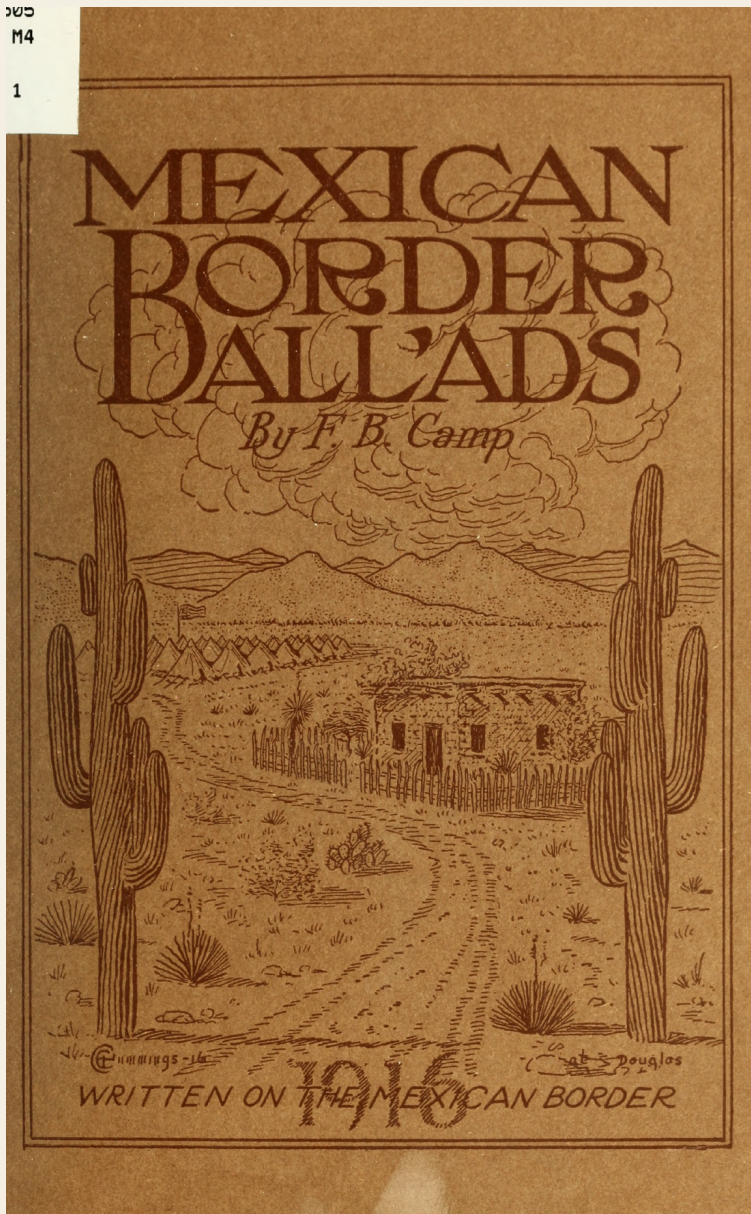
ARCHIVAL IMAGES

Three selective images from the original poetry books

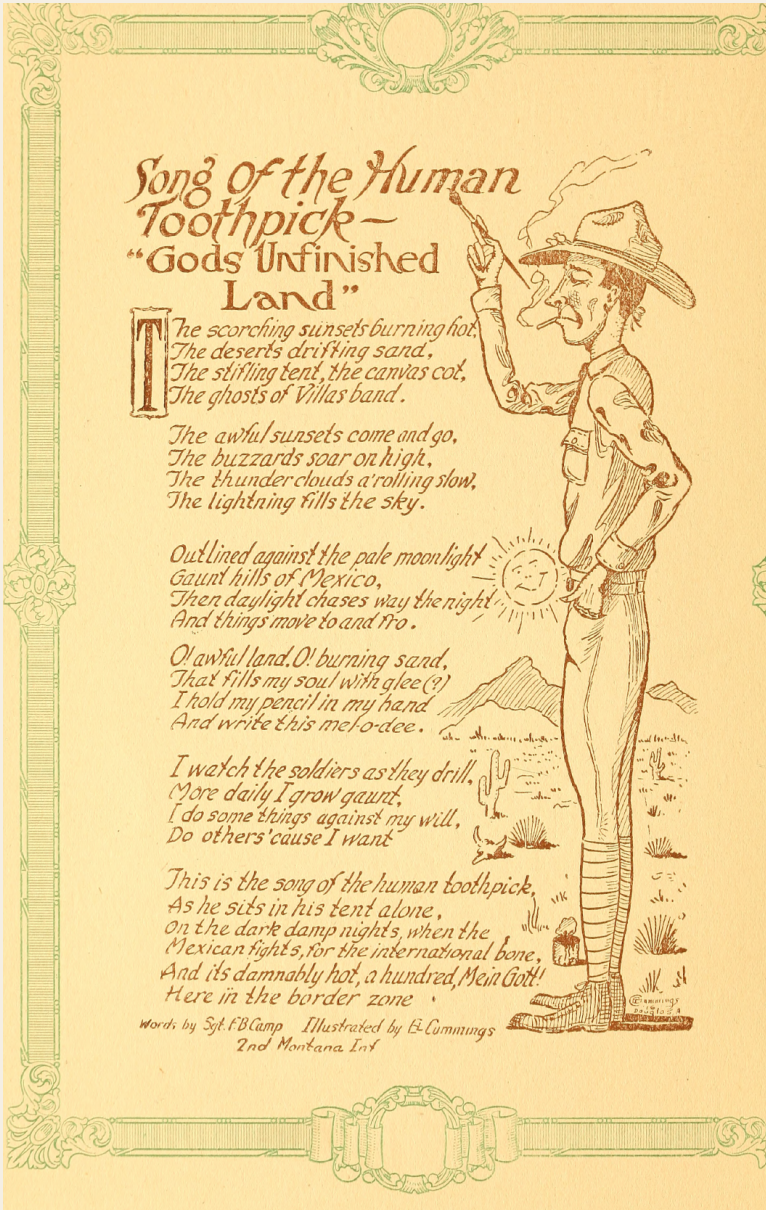
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The illustrated cover of Mexican Border Ballads, Camp's 1916 soldier's souvenir from Douglas, Arizona.



"Song of the Human Toothpick in God's Unfinished Land," a hand-lettered visual page from Mexican Border Ballads. The reset text appears later in the volume.

Alaska Nuggets

By
FRANK B. CAMP

Author of
"American Soldier Ballads"
"Rhymes in Khaki", etc.



*Written and Printed in Alaska
by Alaskans*

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
Alaska Publishing Company
1921

The Anchorage title page of Alaska Nuggets (1921), naming Camp's fourth complete poetry collection and its Alaska publisher.

INTRODUCTION

Soldier, camp reader, forester, and Alaska ballad-maker

Frank Bernard Camp wrote from inside the rough institutions he described. A sergeant in the Second Montana Infantry on the Mexican border, he turned drills, injections, mess halls, forced marches, desert heat, homesickness, and barracks rumor into fast vernacular ballads. During the First World War he carried those poems from camp to camp on what a contemporary report called an “enthusiasm-arousing campaign”; after the war his work followed him through the Montana forests and into Alaska, where a 1921 newspaper described him as an Anchorage writer who had traveled the interior trails. The books move with him: *Mexican Border Ballads* is close to the decorated soldier souvenir, *American Soldier Ballads* enlarges that experience into a comic and patriotic army chronicle, *Rhymes in Khaki* turns toward memory and the North-West, and *Alaska Nuggets* adopts the voices and legends of sour-dough country. Camp could be funny, sentimental, boastful, self-mocking, and harsh within a few pages. His wartime nationalism also carries the ethnic caricature and coercive rhetoric of its moment. This edition resets 116 distinct poems from the four complete public-domain collections, restoring stanza spaces, physical-wrap lineation, subtitles, notes, and stepped refrains. Five later printings of already included poems are recorded as witnesses rather than repeated. Later books from 1932 and 1942 are documented but not silently reconstructed from incomplete or restricted copies.

BIOGRAPHY

The documented life, publications, travels, and unresolved record

The record and its limits

Library catalogues identify the poet as Frank Bernard Camp and give 1882 as his birth year. No birth certificate, census chain, family account, or obituary has yet been securely connected to the soldier-poet, and the established authority records leave his death year open. A grave index contains a Frank Bernard Camp born 14 April 1882 and buried at Wheaton, Illinois, in 1958, but no surviving record located for this edition links that man to the Second Montana Infantry, Anchorage, or Camp's books. This edition therefore uses the cautious date line 1882–after 1949: 1882 is the consistent catalogued year, and 1949 is the date of his latest verified book.

The uncertainty is not evidence that Camp vanished early. His publications trace a long career: four poetry collections appeared between 1916 and 1921, another collection followed in 1932, a heavily revised soldier-ballad volume appeared in Chicago in 1942, and *Alaska Tales for the Cheechako* was published in 1949. What remains missing is the civil and family record that would join those books to a documented childhood, household, and death.

Second Montana Infantry and the Mexican border

Camp's first secure setting is the 1916 Mexican Border mobilization. *Mexican Border Ballads*, self-published at Douglas, Arizona, calls itself "written on the border." The closing illustrated poem credits "Sgt. F. B. Camp" and E. Cummings of the Second Montana Infantry. A contemporary profile later stated directly that Camp served with that regiment on the border. The book's dedication memorializes Kenneth W. Pickett of Big Timber, Montana, a Headquarters Company soldier who died at Douglas on 30 August 1916 from illness contracted while on duty. Camp's poem insists that disease in service, rather than enemy fire, made Pickett's death a soldier's death.

The 1916 book is both literary object and unit souvenir. Its decorated borders, comic initials, barracks jokes, and cartoons surround poems about the train south, drill commands, letters home, target practice, chaplains, National Guard service, and a disastrous encounter with wild mescal turnip. Many of these pieces became the raw material for *American Soldier Ballads* the next year. Camp revised titles, altered local references, and expanded some poems from the Mexican border into the more general setting of an American army camp.

The First World War and the camp-reading circuit

American Soldier Ballads, published in Los Angeles in 1917 by Geo. Rice & Sons, presents Camp as an active soldier. Its foreword says the verses were written by one “who has been and still is a soldier in Uncle Sam’s army.” The book is dedicated to Major General H. A. Greene and addresses regulars, volunteers, the National Guard, and the new National Army. Its forty-nine ballads mix instruction, morale, satire, complaint, recruitment, and patriotic appeal. The voice is deliberately enlisted rather than official: Camp boasts that he does not possess the gifts of Burns, Byron, Kipling, Longfellow, or Robert Service, but that soldiers know he writes the truth.

A report in the 30 October 1917 Deming, New Mexico, edition of *Trench and Camp*, preserved through a later transcription, supplies the fullest contemporary account of his wartime activity. When the United States entered the war, Camp applied to an officers’ training camp but was rejected because of weight loss and a damaged right leg. He answered by planning a thirty-five-week “enthusiasm-arousing campaign” through army camps and cantonments, securing permission from commanding officers to read his ballads and gathering new material. “Doing My Bit” in *Rhymes in Khaki* retells the same rejection and turns Camp’s travel, writing, and camp appearances into an alternative form of service.

The poems repeatedly shift between loyalty and enlisted skepticism. Camp attacks slackers and Germany, yet he also records miserable food, arbitrary rules, rumors, medical injections, low pay, bad tents, lonely men, and officers made ridiculous. The humor works because the patriotic argument never entirely suppresses the private’s complaint.

Montana forests, the North-West, and Alaska

A 24 June 1919 *Anniston Star* item, known through the same later research account, called Camp a “soldier poet” and reported that he had joined the United States Forestry service, making his base at the Coram Ranger Station in Montana. The geography fits the turn already visible in *Rhymes in Khaki*. That 1918 book remembers Montana streams, Pipe Creek, packhorses, Caribou Joe, Chinook winds, mountain trails, and “the Big North West” alongside poems of France, military rejection, love, failure, and memory.

By 1921 Camp identified himself on the title page of *Alaska Nuggets* as “of Anchorage, Alaska.” The book was written and printed in Alaska by the Alaska Publishing Company. A notice in the *Cordova Daily Times* on 7 December 1921 called him an Anchorage author and said he knew Alaska “from the inside out,” having mushed over practically all the interior trails. The newspaper praised the poems as a contribution to territorial literature and recommended the volume as a gift. This contemporary item corrects a modern blog’s mistaken assumption that the paper came from Cordova, Tennessee: it was Cordova, Alaska.

Camp did not claim to have joined the Klondike stampede. The preliminary poem “Somehow You Get It” openly imagines old sour-doughs telling him that he had never been on the Dawson Trail or witnessed the stampede, but had nevertheless learned its “Hunch” from the men who had. Elsewhere he claims travel, camping, prospecting, dog-team, hunting, fishing, and trail experience. The book’s mixture of personal assertion, borrowed testimony, tall tale, boosterism, and local vocabulary should not be reduced either to eyewitness memoir or outsider fantasy; Camp deliberately builds authority from both experience and listening.

Later books and renewed soldier ballads

Camp continued publishing after the four books reset here. *War and Peace* appeared from the Caxton Printers in Caldwell, Idaho, in 1932; catalogue records describe it as a 160-page book of poems. No complete public-domain digital witness was located for this edition, so its poems are not guessed from titles or later quotations.

In 1942 Consolidated Book Publishers of Chicago issued *American Soldier Ballads in the Language of an Army Man*, a 160-page illustrated volume with official photographs from the Army Signal Corps, Army Air Corps, Marine Corps, and Navy. The University of North Texas catalogue describes Camp as an Army correspondent who traveled from Alaska to the Mexican border. Its contents combine revised First World War pieces—among them “Our Hitch in Hell,” “Several Kinds of Rookies,” and “Army Injections”—with Second World War titles such as “The Bugle Blows,” “Come on Everybody, Come on!,” and “We Are Coming.” The surviving online copy is access-restricted and the 1942 copyright status was not established, so the present book records the edition without reproducing unverified text.

Alaska Tales for the Cheechako, a short prose collection, followed in 1949. Later reprint descriptions emphasize its comic and personal stories of Alaska sour-doughs. Its publication proves that Camp’s engagement with Alaska lasted well beyond *Alaska Nuggets*, even though his address and personal circumstances in 1949 remain to be found.

Ballad method, historical language, and reception

Camp’s characteristic unit is a rhymed, forward-driving stanza designed to be heard. He uses drill orders, mock letters, tall tales, military jargon, call-and-response refrains, and the speaking voices of rookies, sergeants, officers, prospectors, sour-doughs, tourists, and abandoned lovers. Some lines are deliberately ungainly; Camp repeatedly jokes about imperfect meter and grammar. The best pieces convert institutional repetition into form: injections, rumors, marches, guard duty, camp food, and the trails of Alaska return as accumulating lists.

The books also preserve difficult historical attitudes. Their anti-German propaganda, militarism, ethnic caricature, gender assumptions, and language of conquest belong to the mobilization culture that produced them. The Alaska poems sometimes turn Indigenous presence and frontier history into settler legend. This edition does not silently modernize those positions. It restores damaged words and lineation while leaving legible historical language in place, and the editorial notes distinguish correction from moral endorsement.

Camp's most durable poem is "Our Hitch in Hell." Its joke—that soldiers who have already served in an earthly hell are guaranteed heaven—escaped the 1917 book and generated many military, police, and emergency-service variants. Later forms are often called "The Final Inspection," "The Soldier's Prayer," or "The Policeman's Prayer" and frequently circulate without Camp's name. The 1942 volume reprinted his poem, and later military memory adapted its premise across wars. The popularity of the descendants has often obscured the exact 1917 wording restored here.

Unresolved research

The next biographical advance will require records rather than another catalogue search: the Second Montana Infantry service and muster files; personnel or appointment records for the Coram Ranger Station; Anchorage directories and territorial censuses; correspondence or publisher files for the Alaska Publishing Company, Caxton Printers, and Consolidated Book Publishers; copyright files for the 1932 and 1942 books; and newspapers in Montana, Alaska, Idaho, and Illinois after 1949. Camp's family, exact birthplace, marriages, children, later residences, and death remain unverified. The apparent 1882–1958 Wheaton grave identity is a lead, not a conclusion.

MEXICAN BORDER BALLADS

Complete poetry text • 1916

The distinct poems from the 1916 edition follow in source order. Physical line wraps have been rejoined; true stanza spaces, indentations, subtitles, internal headings, and authorial notes remain.

To Kenneth W. Pickett

Dedicated to the Memory of Kenneth W. Pickett

“Not the rattle of the drum for him,
Not the piping of the fife,
Nor the bullets of the enemy,
That took him from this life.

Let the music of his death
Be the tramp of marching men,
For the heart of Kenneth Pickett
Was as big as any ten.

Of his fortitude and patience,
Of his grit that never died,
Oh, Montana and Big Timber?
You can think of him with pride.

Step by step, he took with others,
Here where men’s souls live and die,
And his smile was always cheery
For his motto was, “I’ll try.”

Not for him the bugle blowing,
As it called the men to arms,
Not for him the smoke of battle,
With its brutal, crushing charms.

In this land he gave his all
Midst the crisis and disorder;
Father, mother, sweetheart, friend—
When he died here on the border.

We will miss him from among us,
For he surely was a man,
But his spirit will be with us,
Always marching in the van.

We will hear his laugh a-ringing,
Feel the pressure of his hand,
For we know that he died fighting,
In the service of his land.

Not the rattle of the drum for him,
Nor the piping of the fife,
Not the bullets of the enemy,
That took him from this life.

Let the music of his death,
Be the tramp of marching men,
For the heart of Kenneth Pickett
Was as big as any ten.

Publication. First published in *Mexican Border Ballads*. Douglas, Arizona: F. B. Camp, 1916, unpaginated.

The Wild Turnip Eaters

Remember the story has been told,
And magnified a thousand fold,
Concerning some rookies exceedingly bold,
Who ate of a root that knocked them cold.

When out on a hike the regiment went,
Deserted the camp and vacated tent,
Six or eight hours in marching spent,
'Till they reached the hills that were twisted and bent.

Wonderful hike the Colonel had planned,
As through his glasses the desert he scanned,
Where the bloody hot winds, scorched and fanned,

The coulees where cacti grows in the sand,
Out where the Spanish Bayonet grows,
Out where a sluggish brooklet flows,
Out on the hills where it never snows,

And the red hot wind forever blows.
“Get ready to march,” the order came,
Private and Captain both the same,
Part of the big political game,

No one excused but the sick and the lame.
Food to be taken for every man,
Hauled in a wagon by mules a span,
Cocked in a monstrous kitchen pan,

And served to 'em all in a mess kit can.
Away from the camp the regiment swung,
While many a song the rookies sung,
Hard on the throat, the ear and the lung,

In civilized life they'd surely be hung.
A winding column of cotton O. D.
That from a distance was hard to see,
The Colonel a thousand men and me,

Out on the Mexican Boundary.
Twenty-two miles from camp we stopped,

Pup tents pitched the regiment flopped,
While the Colonel the sweat from his face just mopped,

As the big red sun the lime hills topped.
Oh, a wonderful place we chose for a camp,
Where the wind was windy and the rain was damp,
Where the smelter smoke came down like a clamp,

And smothered the flame in the kitchen lamp.
Now this is a tale of the wild turnip squad,
Not of a country forgotten by God,
Where the brown grass bakes in the dobie sod,

And the soul of a man becomes a clod.
It appears where the sluggish brooklets flow,
A specie of turnip is wont to grow,
The mescal turnip if you all must know,

The eating of which makes a man loco,
Not only loco but awfully sick,
In a horrible manner and awfully quick,
It hits like a mule is wont to kick,

And you take the count while the watches tick.
Thus it was on the camping ground,
While some curious rookies were snooping around,
This poisonous root was duly found,

And eaten in pieces from an ounce to a pound.
Just think of them eating this nauseous weed,
Bucking the unwritten law and the creed,
Where all vegetation, trees, bushes and seed,

Hold poisons that none of their systems need,
Digging a root from out of the soil,
Where poisons simmer and bubble and boil,
Where deadly rattlers sleep in a coil,

And the thorns of the mesquite is nature's foil.
Eating this root like a famished horde,
Not men who were fed on the government board,
Men who had studied and believed in the Lord,

Is it any wonder they all were floored?
Grovvelling around in the dirt and sand,

Sick at the stomach, and weak in the hand,
Cussing the root, the hike and the land,
Damning the root to beat the band.
“Wild Turnip,” said one was the name of the thing,
As he passed the pieces around the ring,
And watched them eat as they started to sing,
Of the glorious future the years would bring.
Some in a minute, some in an hour,
Were made deathly sick by the poisonous power,
While the spirit of death, commenced to tower,
And withdraw life from the rookies dower.
“Assinine ignorance,” said Major Riddell,
Why it certainly beats all the hinges of Hell,
How a damn fool who is healthy and well,
Could claim that he had an ounce of brain cell.
Now I’ve told you about these poor galoots,
Who fell by the road side dressed in their boots,
How most of them thot they were shooting the shoots,
When the poison had gripped them that grows in the roots.
How back to the camp they staggered that night,
Ejecting their suppers and pulling belts tight,
Some of them green and some of them white,
But not one amongst them ready to fight.
How the Major in front of the hospital ward,
Castor oil in their systems in large doses poured,
While their thots to the heights of ridicule soared,
And they swore they’d be satisfied with Govt. board.
Now this is a tale with a moral forsooth,
Everything written the absolute truth,
Some things that are chewed in the mouth by the tooth,
Will often destroy the fountains of youth.

Publication. First published in *Mexican Border Ballads*. Douglas, Arizona: F. B. Camp, 1916, unpaginated.

Dedicated to the Men of the National Guard

Wonderful men of the National Guard,
You who are going back,
Back to the states you came from,
With never a chance to hack

A notch on your rifles or pistols,
Because of a Mexican shot,
Or a memory of quick forced marches,
Thru the land God made and forgot,

List to these words I have written,
Impress them all on your mind,
So when you are back in your home states,
Your thots of the border 'll be kind.

For months you have been on the Border,
'Midst the dust and the wind and the heat,
And you've drilled on the dusty P'rade ground,
With an ache in your back and your feet,

You've messed in the bloomin' mess hall,
When the mess was as bitter as gall,
And you've messed on the red hot dobie,
When there wasn't a building at all.

You've dug mesquite and cacti and thorns,
And ditches and holes in the ground,
'Till the sound of the pick and the shovel,
Was a weird and a Hellish sound.

You've baked in the blistering sunshine,
When doing your duty as guard,
While your thots were back in your home town,
With the girl who had sent you a card.

You've cussed the Colonel and Majors,
The Captains and Lieutenants too,
And the things you have said of the president,
Were rabid and caustic and true.

You've taken the typhoid injections,
Had the vaccine scratched on your arm,
While you thot of the towns and the cities,
The woods and the ocean and farm,

You've longed for the smell of the big woods,
As you drilled in a dusty file
When the hot wind blew from the desert,
And wiped from your faces a smile.

You've policed the kitchen and stables,
Have worked with an axe on the wood,
That was used in the stove in the kitchen,
For cooking the Government food.

You've dined on the luscious corned Willie,
With hard tack and beans a la mode,
And packed in a stifling Pullman,
Two thousand miles you have rode.

You've hunted the bugs of the desert,
Like pirates who sought for a prize,
And for weeks you fought a real battle,
With thousands and millions of flies.

Oh, the things that you did were distasteful,
But regardless of all that you spurned,
Every man who has been to the Border,
A wonderful lesson has learned.

You have learned to be prompt and efficient,
You have learned to do as you're told,
You've learned to obey every order,
And the power of American gold.

You have learned of the man who is President,
The man of them all who's to blame,
For keeping you men on the Border,
To help the political game.

Now men of the National Guard,
You who are going back,
To the towns and cities you came from,
With rifles and full marching pack;

Remember you're only a unit,
Just one of the soldier clan,
No longer a boy or a weakling,
But a first class soldier and man.

Remember these things I have written,
That have caused you oodles of pain,
But forget them all when your Uncle
Sammy Long Legs needs you again.

So here's to you men of the National Guard,
Whom I came to the Border with,
You've established a place on the Border,
That's real and not merely a myth.

You've grumbled and growled in the service,
You've hollered with voices quite loud,
But each of your states that sent you,
Will feel of you all very proud.

Not only your states, but your country,
And Europe and all of the world,
Will remember you men of the National Guard,
Who onto the Border were hurled,

So here's wishing you luck on the journey,
That's taking you home once again,
You're a Hell raising bunch of good fellows,
And every Damn one of you're men.

Publication. First published in *Mexican Border Ballads*. Douglas, Arizona: F. B. Camp, 1916, unpaginated.

Song of the Human Toothpick in God's Unfinished Land

The scorching sunsets burning hot,
The desert's drifting sand,
The stifling tent, the canvas cot,
The ghosts of Villa's band.

The awful sunsets come and go,
The buzzards soar on high,
The thunderclouds a'rolling slow,
The lightning fills the sky.

Outlined against the pale moonlight
Gaunt hills of Mexico,
Then daylight chases 'way the night,
And things move to and fro.

O awful land! O! burning sand,
That fills my soul with glee!
I hold my pencil in my hand
And write this mel-o-dee.

I watch the soldiers as they drill,
More daily I grow gaunt,
I do some things against my will,
Do others 'cause I want.

This is the song of the human toothpick,
As he sits in his tent alone,
On the dark damp nights, when the
Mexican fights, for the international bone,
And it's damnably hot, a hundred, Mein Gott!
Here in the border zone.

Publication. First published in *Mexican Border Ballads*. Douglas, Arizona: F. B. Camp, 1916, unpaginated. Words by Sgt. F. B. Camp; illustrated by E. Cummings, Second Montana Infantry.

AMERICAN SOLDIER BALLADS

Complete poetry text • 1917

The distinct poems from the 1917 edition follow in source order. Physical line wraps have been rejoined; true stanza spaces, indentations, subtitles, internal headings, and authorial notes remain.

Foreword

Miscellaneous ballads pertinent to the war and the American soldier, each ballad being a true incident taken from present day conditions or a chapter from the everyday life of the American Soldier. Not literary gems such as the real poets have written, not real poems possessing perfect metre, not dazzling essays composed by a master mind, but simply a humble collection of terse jingles and lilting rhymes, written by one who has been and still is a soldier in Uncle Sam's army. Each verse conveying a truth, some humorous, some solemn, some sarcastic and caustic and some foolish, but each endowed with a subtle kick, a pricking point and a real meaning. Not artificial, not socialistic, not anarchistic, not bigoted nor running along any special groove, but roaming at random and touching the real things of the present day, both outside and inside the ranks of the army. Written for the men in the armies of Uncle Sam, the regular units, the volunteer organizations, the National Guard and the National Army, with the fond hope and sincere wish that they will read them in the same spirit in which they are written and that the reading of them will enable them to pass away many happy hours and help create a feeling of goodfellowship and unity that will be everlasting.

*Not mine, dear Longfellow's gift of song,
To whose rich notes our country daily sings;
Just mine the power to thrill the soldier throng,
And wake their souls to dreams of nobler things.
Yet, if by chance my feeble strains are heard,*

*By some who hear them ere their force be spent,
If by their echoes others have been stirred,
Why, my 'orful' verse has 'did it,' I'm content.*

A Plea for Peace in the Future Years to Come

Ye mighty angels of the God above,
Who've ceased to sing the joyful song of love,
Let those golden voices ring aloud today,
With peaceful messages brought by the Dove.

Love's triumph, that time has written in the sands,
Love's triumph that bids us raise our hands,
Wakes in our souls a feeling that shall live
And fill our ears with music of celestial bands.

Love's triumph; Love the chain omnipotent,
That binds this world of ours to that on high,
Cannot we send a message through its links,
To Him, who for us, a long, long time ago did die?

Let the nations of the world hear the music float,
Of peace and love throughout the land and o'er the sea,
Thrill all hearts with the angel's echoing voice,
And all souls with a great burst of tranced melody,

Today when love should reign supreme,
When we should see the angel faces of our dream,
A shadow dark and sordid threatens all the world,
And love and brightness fade with hopes supreme.

Life's conflict past, upon the wings of faith,
We must build again a lasting love and peace,
Our faith in God shall stand until the end,
And war with all its horrors then will cease.

Peace in the years that are yet to come,
Peace on earth and good will among all men,
Lily white the world that now is filled with gloom,
Faith among nations, a brotherhood and peace. Amen

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 13–14.

Over the Top

"Over the Top," we will go some day,
Said Corporal John, and I'm goin' to pray,
That our fightin' bunch will enter the fray
With the glorious flag of the U. S. A.

We've done ten months without a hitch,
But now our feet are beginning to itch,
So we've decided we'd like to pitch,
Our O. D. tents in a foreign ditch.

You ask us why we are not content,
With the life we live in the army tent,
With the weeks and days we've already spent,
While we've waited, the German lines to dent.

Listen you people and I will tell,
In language plain and easy to spell,
Why life in the camp is surely hell,
While our brothers fight 'neath the bursting shell.

We came to the camp to fight we thought,
The excitement of battle was what we sought,
Our brains were trained and our bodies wrought,
With the daily drill that the army taught.

We have been in the camp, it seems ten years,
Drilling each day with our smiles and tears,
Hearing the rumors a rookie hears,
'Till our souls are worried with madd'ning fears

Fears that we must continue to stay,
Here till the call of judgment day,
With never a chance to enter the fray,
And fight for the cause of the U. S. A.

Rumors are rife that we've been appraised,
Our efficient work has been lauded and praised,
And our proper rating, listed and phased,
While the standard of all has been duly raised.

But of all the rumors that we have heard,
Of the things that haven't and have occurred,
Which have 'roused the men and their spirits stirred,
This is the one that is least absurd.

We heard it today while eating the mess,
How it started it's hard to guess,
But if it is true we'll surely bless,
The one who'll publish it in the press.

The rumor was this, that we'd soon flop,
Where shell and shrapnel whine and hop,
And the booming guns never once stop,
Where we'd have our chance to go "Over the Top".

We want it to happen and very quick,
'Twill make the Kaiser and Hindenburg sick,
When they see us men of the nation's pick,
Come "Over the Top," determined to lick.

We are a happy and restless lot,
When we bunk-fatigue on the army cot,
Where the nights are cool and the days are not,
As we think of the Kaiser and his "Goot Gott."

A dollar a day the private gets,
While it's forty-five for us corporal vets,
And the sergeant's work seventy-five now nets,
It has livened the army and killed the frets.

They give us a chance to work ourselves up,
From a sergeant's job to the rank of a "Pup,"
If we'll study real hard, some day we can sup,
The comforts of life from an officer's cup.

Our army is growing much larger each day,
Because of the system and increased pay,
But we are teaching ourselves to pray,
For the day we'll enter the big world fray.

"Over the Top," if it takes a year,
We'll go some day without any fear,
And the German soldiers will disappear,
Where we carry the flag that we all hold dear.

"Over the Top," where machine guns play,
Went Corporal John one winter day,
While he fought in the ranks of the U. S. A.
With a thousand others he fell in the fray.

Onward they swept where big shells drop,
You had to kill 'em to make 'em flop,
There was nothing that day that would make 'em stop,
The day when our flag went "Over the Top."

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 15–17.

We Want to Go 'Cross

The Song of the Nation's Fighting Men

"We want to go 'cross,"

This is the song of the soldier pard,
The tune is a Go-get-'em air,
The music is nifty and very much barred,
But the rythm is always there.

This is the song that they always will sing,
And the music will blend with their tramp,
Where Uncle Sam's flag, the blessed old rag,
Waves in the air where they camp.

This is the song of a brave bunch of men,
Men from every station in life,
Who gave up their all, to answer the call,
And mix in the German strife.

This is the song that all of them sing,
Every word is stamped deep on their minds,
And the country shall hear their voices so clear,
As they float on the troublesome winds.

This is the song, " We want to go 'cross,"
Where war with the nations is rife,
We want just one chance, with the others in France,
To march with the drum and the fife.

They are getting us ready and making us steady,
When we're started we never will stop,
'Till our strong, khaki line reaches the Rhine,
And then we'll "Go over the top."

We've doctors and surgeons of national fame,
Who joined the men of the Eagle,
With scalpel and knife, they will save limb and life,
While we're chasing the lean German Beagle.

We've lawyers, architects, bright engineers,
All men who believe in a God,
Who'll carry our banner, with printer and tanner,

When we march on the green German sod.

We've students and merchants and servants of God,
All men who have followed life's game,
And the words of the song that all of them sing,
Are cheerful and always the same.

"We want to go 'cross," to the trenches in France,
Where the wheels of old Time slowly tick,
We want to determine the fate of the German,
And make him acknowledge he's sick.

"We want to go 'cross," where our brothers now fight,
Our feet are sure itching to roam,
And we'll fight there until we've licked Kaiser Bill,
And placed the God Mars in a tomb.

" We want to go 'cross, " and we're going some day,
Just as soon as we're ready and fit,
And with bullet and gun, we will lick every Hun,
'Till the Kaiser has finished his bit.

" We want to go 'cross, " 'tis the song we will sing,
'Till the words can be heard o'er the world,
And we march 'cross the Rhine, in close battle line,
With Democracy's banner unfurled.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 18–19.

Our Hitch in Hell

The Musings of a Soldier Revised and Set Down in Verse

Every day and night I'm thinking of the things I left behind,
Yet I loath to put on paper what is running through my mind,
But I think I'll feel much better, so I guess I'll take a chance,
Ere the regiment is ordered to the shores of sunny France.

We've dug a million trenches and have cleared ten miles of ground,
And a meaner place this side of Hell, I know has ne'er been found,
We've drilled in dust and scorching sun, in mud and driving rain,
'Till our eyes and ears and legs and arms were yelling loud with pain.
But there's still one consolation, gather closely while I tell,
When we die we're bound for Heaven, 'cause we've done our hitch in Hell.

We've built a thousand mess halls for the cooks to stew our beans,
We've stood a hundred guard mounts, and cleaned the camp latrines,
We've washed a million mess kits, and peeled a million spuds,
We've rolled a million blanket rolls and washed a million duds,
The number of parades we've made is awfully hard to tell,
But we'll not parade in Heaven, for we paraded here in Hell.
We've passed a million sleepless hours upon our army cots,
And shook a hundred centipedes from out our army socks,
We've marched a hundred thousand miles and made a thousand camps,
And pulled a million cacti thorns from out our army pants,
So when our work on earth is done, our friends behind will tell,
" When they died they went to Heaven, 'cause they did their hitch in Hell."

The slum and coffee we have cussed, likewise the Willie canned,
We've damned the gentle gusts of wind that filled the air with sand,
We've taken the injections, ten million germs or more,
And the vaccine scratched upon our arms has made them very sore,
With all these things to get our goats, we all are here to tell,
When the order comes to cross the pond we'll give the Germans Hell.

When the final taps is sounded and we lay aside life's cares,
And we do the last and gloried parade, on Heaven's shining stairs,

And the angels bid us welcome and the harps begin to play
We can draw a million canteen checks and spend them in a day,
It is then we'll hear St. Peter tell us loudly with a yell,
"Take a front seat you soldier men, you've done your hitch in Hell."

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 20–21.

Several Kinds of Rookies

When a Rookie joins the army, in the Regs, or volunteers,
Swears allegiance to this country for a certain term of years,
You can gamble that the hard ones will play upon his fears,
They will cause his knees to wobble and his eyes to fill with tears.

They will send him to the guard line, to wrap about the Band,
And to make him hold a rifle in his military hand,
They will chase him to the Sergeant for a dozen different things,
A wrist watch, or a pillow, or a soldier's set of rings.

They will give him extra duty in the kitchen or the street,
And put him in the guardhouse, for walking on his feet,
They will fill his mind with horrors, of the time he has to serve,
'Till his brain is all a jumble and his mind begins to swerve.

They will rag him, they will nag him, 'till the chap is feeling ill,
And if he is a certain kind, he will beat it o'er the Hill,
There's another kind of Rookie, who's feelings ne'er are hurt,
And a dozen cocky Sergeants couldn't make the chap desert.

He's a smiling, husky fellow, who the nagging doesn't harm,
He's a product of the city, or a son from off the farm,
He's a big, good hearted fellow, with a bunch of common sense,
Who smiles at all the hazing, 'cause his mind is never dense.

He wants to be a soldier, in the ranks of Uncle Sam,
Wants to stick his fingers in the military jam,
Wants to be proficient and obey the strictest rule,
Wants to do his four years in the nation's biggest school.

Then we have the rowdy Rookie, who is looking for a snap,
He's a fighting, quarrelsome youngster, ever ready for a scrap,
He's always hunting trouble, which to find is never hard,
For him it's extra duty, on the woodpile in the yard.

They put him in the guardhouse, when his character is spoiled,
He becomes a surly creature, who is sure enough hard boiled,
He gets to be a menace, when he's running 'round at large,
'Till for some imagined reason, they give him his discharge.

Thus they come to the army, the nation's most wonderful school,
The glad man, the sad man, the wise man and the fool,
Here they sift the weaklings, the ones who falter and lag,
And keep the strong and the brave ones to guard our country and flag.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 22–23.

Just a Recruit

Jim was a rookie, a new recruit,
Learning to drill and learning to shoot,
Learning to answer the Sergeant's call,
And the kitchen police, in the long mess hall.

His frame was lanky and awfully thin,
His eyes lacked fire and his face lacked chin,
His hair was sandy and seldom combed,
And the look on his face was of one entombed.

The clothes that he wore for a uniform,
Hung like sacks on his lanky form,
His shoes were tens and a double E,
And the walk of the lad was a sight to see.

Thus was Jim when they sent him down
To join the Regs, in a border town,
A big, simple minded, country galoot,
Learning to drill and learning to shoot.

Now there is a rule in the U. S. A.
That enables a soldier, to get away
For a few short hours after the drill,
So he hikes for town, some time to kill.

It happened one day, that Jim came down,
To the busy streets of the Border town,
His thots on his girl and the day he had met 'er,
He hunted the Office and asked for a letter.

The letter he wanted had failed to come,
So Jim, feeling lonely and awfully glum,
Also neglected, and a trifle sore,
Lost himself in thot by the Post Office door.

And as he was standing he failed to see
A Captain bold of the In-fan-tree
Approaching the door, near which he stood,
So he failed to salute, as he really should.

Now the Captain, of course, didn't suspect
The reason of Jim's apparent neglect,
But an order's an order for those that shoot,
So he called Jim down for his non-salute.

"My man," said he, in tones that were stern,
" Why do you fail, my salute to return;
Are you not aware, that the orders call
For a soldier's salute, to his officers all?"

Jim looked at the Captain and then he grinned;
He didn't know, that he'd really sinned.
So he said to the Captain, the poor galoot,
"I ain't no soldier, I'm just a recruit."

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 24–25.

On the Way to the Army Camp

Oh, it's nice to be a soldier,
In the ranks of Uncle Sam,
A bloody, bloomin' soldier,
Who doesn't care a damn.
A soldier in the regulars,
The draft or volunteers,
One who listens to his country's call,
And leaves his home in tears.
It's nice to hear them cheering,
When the train goes through a town
That has builded in the sage brush,
'Mongst a scene of sordid brown.
When we hear the natives cheering,
See the "Chickens" waving flags,
Have the Dollies stuffing candy
In our dirty khaki bags,
It's nice to eat the rations,
That get scarcer every day,
As we pull from out our home town,
For the camp where we will stay.
We have canned horse for luncheon,
For breakfast and for tea;
The brute arrives so often,
It makes me want to flee.
This morning we had jelly,
Which is very seldom seen.
I discovered mine by scouting;
'Twas hiding neath a bean.
Last night as I was sleeping,
I dreamed a funny dream;
I thought that I was eating
Peaches sliced with cold ice cream.
I had a juicy beefsteak,
Cut from a yearling cow,
But just as I was cutting it,
A rookie hollered "chow."
I awakened from my slumber,

Which had been very brief,
To find my chunk of canned horse
Had been taken by a thief.
I won't say I was hungry,
'Cause it sure would sound like hell,
But the names I called that rooky,
Well, I simply cannot tell.
But it's nice to be a soldier,
In the ranks of Uncle Sam,
If you aren't too particular,
And don't give a tinker's dam.
If you want to fight the German
In his home beyond the Rhine,
You will sure enjoy the army,
And think the grub divine.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 26–27.

Camp Rumors

We have heard a thousand rumors,
And we'll hear a thousand more,
Before we leave the bloomin' camp For Sunny France's shore.
We have heard them on the p'rade grounds,
We have heard them in our tent,
We have heard the darndest rumors,
'Most every place we went.
Rumors 'bout the Kaiser,
And the millions he had killed,
Rumors 'bout the Russians,
And all the blood they's spilled.
Rumors 'bout the orders,
That would send us 'cross the sea,
Have floated on the atmosphere,
And filled our souls with glee.
Rumors of injections,
For every known ill,
Rumors 'bout the mess hall,
That are very hard to kill.
There are rumors 'bout the submarine,
And all the Prussian crooks,
The damndest bunch of rumors,
That would fill ten thousand books.
Rumors of the Rookie,
Who beat it o'er the hill,
Rumors 'bout the fighting Huns,
And how they fight and kill.
But no matter what the rumor,
We all love Uncle Sam,
And when he has us ready,
We'll the German Kaiser slam.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, p. 28.

Army Injections

First there are typhoid injections,
Three times they puncture the arm,
Filling the soldier with serum,
So the dreaded disease will not harm.

Then they scratch him with vaccine,
To keep the smallpox away,
Creating a sore sometimes painful,
That keeps him from work and from play.

Three shots in the arm for typhoid —
Millions of germs are used;
You can hardly blame the poor Rookie
For thinking he is abused.

Then just as his arms are healing,
And he's getting ready to fight,
He is told of another injection
That will keep his system right.

It has been learned by the army physicians,
Appointed for camp inspections,
That Para Typhoid is a menace,
But it can be killed with injections.

So the order goes forth from the M. D.,
Who belongs to the medical ring,
To gather the soldiers together,
And give them three shots in the wing.

You can hear 'em a groaning and cussing,
And damning the hour and the day,
But all of them go up and take it,
With a smile and nothing to say.

They talk of injections for measles,
For typhus, and 'most ev'ry ill,
'Till the soldier commences to wonder,
If all of his body they'll fill.

Just now he's injected with Comfort,
And with germs that will satisfy,
He's receiving all kinds of injections,
To banish the frown and sigh.

The recruit when he comes to the training camp,
Is scratched with the Vaccine Content,
And his mind is shot with a serum
That prevents his thoughts getting bent.

He is drilled ev'ry day in his unit,
In the Regs, or the National Guard,
Injected with Pep and Efficiency,
'Till his body is toughened and hard.

His mind is injected with clean thoughts,
And he's taught all the things that are right,
'Till his brain and his body are perfect,
And he's ready and willing to fight.

The Serum of Wide World Democracy,
And a love for the blessed old flag,
Are teaching them all to be soldiers,
Who will never falter or lag.

And when Kaiser Bill of the Germans,
Sees the men who are filled with injections,
Coming over the Rhine, in a perfect line,
He won't stop for his army inspections.

He will know he is licked by the men who were picked
From the strongest nation on earth.
Who were given injections and daily inspections,
To show him what Uncle is worth.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 29–31.

The Sunny Side of Army Life

I have written of this soldier life, in a darn sarcastic way,
The drill and work I've raved about, and overlooked the play,
The sombre side, the dreary side, I've headlined in my verse,
Some things I've painted awfully bad and others simply worse.

With grouch and eyesight very dim, I've felt obnoxious things,
I've written with a humor that destroys the joy in things,
Kitchen Police — Fatigue Call — discomforts of the mess,
I've hit them all a wallop and rumbled up their dress.

The non-commisioned officers have made my dander boil,
Because of orders issued that produced a dearth of toil.
The captain and lieutenant have been cussed and also damned,
And the regiment, from soup to nuts, I've very meanly slammed

Oh, I've overlooked the joyful side, when scribbling down my muse,
And have written of discomforts that would give a man the blues,
But now I'm going to cut it with this pencilonian knife,
And tell you of the sunny things in Mr. Rookies life.

There's the ball game on the p'rade grounds, just behind the Major's tent.
There's the fun you have each pay day and the money to be spent,
There's a kangarooing courthouse with a Rookie as a judge,
There's the box of home-made plunder, full of cake and chocolate fudge.
There's the movie with its pictures, when to town you get a pass,
There's the smiling, jolly features of your best beloved lass,
There's the wrestling match and boxing, the bloomin game of craps,
There's the cot that's made of canvas, where you mooch some pleasant naps.

There's the singing in the squad tents, when the rookies get together,
There's the hours we spend in loafing when its wet and rainy weather,
There's the canteen with its candy and its sparkling, cold root beer,
Its cigarettes and souvenirs and other things that cheer.

There's the chaplain and the service he holds each Sunday morn,
There's the dandy Sunday dinner — chicken fricaseed — and corn,

There's the fellow with the camera who snaps you when you're dressed,
And the pictures in your album, of the ones you love the best.

Now I've told you of the sunny things in every soldier's life,
I've written naught of trouble, or of regimental strife,
And every word I've written is absolutely true,
The sunny things are many 'mongst the things we have to do.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 32–33.

The Sons of the Eagle

Dedicated to All the Soldiers of Uncle Sam

You are the sons of the Eagle, red blooded, virile men,
Who have chosen to fight with gun and sword, 'till peace is assured again.
Sturdy and strong, singing the song, heeding your country's cry,
Ready to fight for a thing that is right, ready if need to die.

You are the beak of the Eagle, the Navy its claws that tear,
And the wings, the men in the aeroplanes, that fly in the smoky air,
You came from the crowded cities, you came from the new ploughed fields,
You came from the mountains and prairies, where nature her real men yields.

From the woods that grow in the northern lands,
From each sea coast with its waves and sands,
From the hearts of cities and bushy towns,
Where life in a seething maelstrom drowns
The hopes and the fears of a million souls.
You have placed your names on the nation's scrolls.
From the icy north with its pall of snow,
From the prairies wide where the wind does blow.
From the deserts burning with livid heat,
The nation has heard your tramping feet.
Men in the prime of life are you,
Stalwart backed, and brave and true,
Men who will fight across the seas,
If the Finger writes and Fate decrees,

You men from every station in life,
Who have left a mother, sweetheart or wife,
Men of native and foreign birth,
From every nation on Mother Earth.

You are the breed with the Eagle's creed,
United and standing together.
You will enter the fight, and fight with your might,
And brave all the stormy weather.

You're the Eagle's men, with blood that is red,
With never a tinge of yellow,
Men who won't lag, when you march with the flag,

The loyal and true-hearted fellow.

You're the big man, who has joined the van,
The man with red blood in his veins,
The ones who won't shirk, when asked to do work
Full of danger and possible pains.

You're the men who're sincere, who hold country dear,
Who have mothers and sweethearts and wives,
Who have given up all, to answer the call,
And protect Uncle's flag with your lives.

You are the sons of the Eagle, the strength of its snapping beak,
And all the nations of Europe will know that you aren't weak,
During peace you have been Uncle's servant, during war you will be his slave.
And your wings will hum and your pulses drum 'til the flags of freedom wave.

You are the sons of the Eagle, eager to prove your worth,
Ready to kill if the powers so will, with the best trained men on earth.
You glorious sons of the Eagle, you each have your pledge to fill,
Through the months you are getting ready and learning to fight and drill,
While you're waiting the day of the order that will send you across to France,
Where your brothers and all of the Allies are taking a fighting chance.

With the English, the French and the Russians, you'll bear Democracy's flag,
Silent, determined fighters, who will never falter or lag,
'Till the power of the German Kaiser is wiped from the face of the earth.
You will show the millions of Germans, what the Eagle's sons are worth.
You are the sons of the Eagle, who will fight for the U. S. A.
'Till peace that is everlasting is brought to the world to stay.

A rmy, the National Guard and the New National Army. To you men with the red blood in your veins, who have given up all you hold dear in this world to fight beneath the flag of the old U.S., these humble words are dedicated, with the hope that they will be understood and received in the same spirit in which they are written. May you be successful in all you undertake, victorious in all the battles you wage and may you all return unscathed to your home when the world is once more at peace. These are the best wishes of the people of the United States.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 34–36.

What a Recruit Thought of Army Duty

This is the song of a soldier as he sits in the camp alone,
On the dark, dark nights, when the city lights cause him to sigh and moan,
When he's lonely and blue, though ready to do his bit in the fighting zone.

I'm one of Uncle Sam's soldiers, but simply a volunteer.
My coming was reckoned, when grim duty beckoned, thus I am here.
Here where you drill, learning to kill, ev'ry day in the sun,
Here where you pray, day after day, for a chance at the German Hun.

Here in the U. S. Army camp, after the sun's gone down,
Thinking of fights and watching the lights that twinkle and blaze in town.
Walking my post at midnight, strolling along at my ease,
Praying for hurried action and a chance to do as I please.

Wanting to fight the German, ready to do and die,
Believing in Uncle Sammy, never wondering why,
Looking through powerful glasses at the stars in the deep cobalt,
Hearing far in the distance, the sentry on guard holler, "Halt".

Trying to sleep in the guard tent, trying by closing my eyes,
Fighting the gnats and mosquitos, swatting the pesky flies,
Out on the bloody guard line, scarcely a mile from the camp,
Out with a dozen others doing my nightly tramp.

Thinking of home and mother and the girl I bade farewell,
Believing with old man Sherman, that war is a seething hell,
Vowing by all that's holy, determined I'll never lag,
'Till the German Kaiser Wilhelm, bows to our glorious flag.

This is the song of the soldier on guard in the night alone,
In the bright moonlight, spoilin' for fight in the German Kaiser's zone,
While the senators home, 'neath the capitol dome, pick the International Bone.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 37–38.

Not 'Till Then

When the tiger eats grass like the ox,
And the submarine runs from the whale,
When the turtles wear cotton sox,
And the torpedo's caught by the snail,
When the rattlesnakes fail to scare men,
And centipedes travel like frogs,
When the egg isn't laid by the hen,
And feathers are found on the dogs,
When the tarantula ceases to bite,
And the thorn of the cacti to prick,
When the sun starts to shine in the night,
And pneumonia won't make you sick,
When tabby cats fly through the air,
And burros do roost in the trees,
When flies in the summer are rare,
And school children do as they please,
When fishing is good on the Border,
And the bray of a mule's never heard,
When groceries we don't have to order,
And the future is no longer blurred.
When the wind never riles up the sand,
And the women in dress take no pride,
When the sun doesn't dry up the land,
And the doodle bug's killed for its hide;
When clocks cease to tell us the time,
And William Goats butt from the rear,
When treason and theft aren't crime,
And germs aren't thought of as queer,
When humming birds bray like an ass,
And the raven sings like the lark,
When whiskey and beer get a pass,
And dollars are found in the park.
When gas meters cease to tell lies
And the girls with the soldiers won't spoon,
When the bootlegger finally dies,
And we talk to the man in the moon,
When La Follette and Stone cease to rave,

And the Senate develops some speed,
When King Dollar is pushed from his throne,
And we banish the mad money creed,
When bread is a nickel a loaf,
And the high cost of living is canned,
When the spirit of Unity reigns,
And Ty Cobb always is fanned.
When our army is large and efficient,
And our soldiers are fighting in France,
When we realize what we are in for,
And use system instead of just chance.
When we've thousands and thousands of airplanes,
And a fleet of huge merchant ships,
When we're ready to move 'gainst the Germans,
And fight with our hands, not our lips.
It is then that the poor German soldiers,
Will give up the fight with a sigh,
And Wilhelm, the wicked old Kaiser,
Will cease all his scrapping and die.

The author, who has made a careful study of the present war from a purely American standpoint, has been asked during the past three years by seven thousand, six hundred and twenty-three American soldiers just when he thought the German Kaiser would be killed and the Germans cease fighting. The following lines have been written in answer to these inquiries.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 39–40.

The Daily Drill of the Rookies

The Captain's Lament

I am the captain of a company,
O'er which I rave and gloat,
But showing rookies how to drill,
Has almost got my goat.

At six a. m. the drill call sounds,
The line is full of dents,
Some are crawling into ranks,
Some in their sleeping tents.

The whistle blows, the Top roars out,
"Attention! men in ranks,"
The men are grumbling in the line,
The officers are cranks.

"Right dress," ' ' the order then is yelled,
Some men they can't see straight,
The line looks like the pickets
On a broken wooden gate.

It's "Jones step out" and "Smith get back,"
And "Dobson lift your head,"
And "Corporal Jimmy Dodgers,
You stand like you are dead."

"Inspection Arms" ' ' the order comes,
The bolts they click and rattle,
They sound just like a bum stenog.
Or Villa's men in battle.

"Heads up, Eyes front, now stand that way,
And Johnson stop your talk,
Right face, Forward march, I say,
For Mike's sake learn to walk."

"Column right," the order comes,
"Damn it, watch your step;
You're not marching at a funeral,
So fill yourselves with pep."

"Squads left about" and "Right oblique,
Ye gods, you're sure a show.
You turn the corners like a wheel,
You're rotten and you're slow."

"Company halt, Right, shoulder arms,
Please do it with a snap,
Confound you, Sergeant Billy,
You haven't time to gap."

Thus it goes on day by day,
When rookies learn to drill,
If you're captain of a company,
You sure will get your fill.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 41–42.

Impressions of a Few Days in the Army Camp

Turmoil, confusion, things all upset,
Wind storms and thunder, rain that is wet,
The drill in the sun that is sure burning hot,
The whole commissary tied in a knot.

Canned milk and hard-tack furnish some fun,
The bloomin' corned Willie, that never gets done.
The pop and the candy and nice ice cream cones,
Help straighten the kinks in our muscles and bones.

Water in pipes that is really luke warm,
Red ants by thousands constantly swarm,
Typhoid injections, ten million germs,
Language by non-coms, any old terms.

Letters each day from the folks back at home,
The company barber clipping your dome,
Foot inspection, the nursing of corns,
Twentytwo buglers blowing their horns.

Thirty-two sick men lying in bed.
Sweating and groaning with pains in their head,
Rookies complaining about the chow,
Wishing for eggs and milk from a cow.

Mess kits and rifles all in disorder,
One German rookie crossing the border,
Men in the tents sing "Over the Top,"
While the new special orders never do stop.

Special detail for the men in the squads,
Blankets and ponchos rolled up in wads,
Cartridges issued, one bandolier,
Some of the rookies feeling quite queer,

Beautiful shower baths once every day,
Mattresses stuffed full of new mown hay,
Jitney trolleys that take you to town,
Root beer in schooners, bright sparkling brown.

New supply sergeants riding on mules,
Wise men and soldiers, soldiers and fools,
Everything gradually getting the stamp,
Of "American Efficiency" here in the camp.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 43–44.

The Woman and the Rookie

The Rookie was tired of camp life, as he sat in the first squad tent,
His hat was tilted sideways and his back and his knees were bent,
So the Captain passing took pity and gave him a pass to go
For a few short hours to civilized bowers, to walk on the Alamo.

He put on his brand new leggins, his tie and his tailored blouse,
And said good bye to the Captain as he passed the old guard house.
His fellow rookies in durance cursed as he started to go
To the bright wide streets of the city, where schooners of rootbeer flow.

Oh, the feeling that filled the Rookie, whose face was a sun burned brown,
As he boarded a jitney trolley and started to ride to town,
Was one he long remembered, one he could never forget,
A joyous, satisfied feeling, that moistened his eyes with wet.

He called at the House of Welcome, where the lights were burning bright,
Called because he was asked to on that long remembered night.
And there he met one Woman, a girl in a thousand I guess,
She asked him a hundred questions and he answered them all with a "Yes".

Them she said, "Let's move to the outside and sit where it's dark, and cool,
And I'll tell you the dream of my lifetime, the one where I'm teaching school.
So they went from the room of brightness, to the cool, dark porch outside,
And the Woman she told the Rookie many things as he sat by her side.

Told him of foreign countries, the Isle of the Philippine,
Told him of rain and sunshine and other things she had seen,
Told him about her Daddy, who rode into Mexico,
Wonderful things she told him, things that were really so.

The Rookie sat by the Woman, there on the dark, cool porch,
There where the heat of their friendship hadn't a chance to scorch,
And she told him about her childhood, her youth and the after years,
"Till her eyes and those of the Rookie were filled with genuine tears.

Oh, the Woman she talked to the Rookie in a very wonderful way,
Not as a total stranger she had known part of a day,
But as one she had known for ages, numbered by many years,
A friend of the past and the future, thus destroying his fears;

Fears of a brutal environment, where men's hopes slowly die,
Tear of the ignorant mortal, who crawls beneath the sky,
Fear of the backward sliding on the slippery hill of Hate,
Fear of the shackles welded by the grim sure hand of Fate.

She spoke of Wilson as President, of the wonderful things he'd done,
She spoke of the German Kaiser, his creed and the brutal Hun,
How the orders issued from Washington were just as they ought to be,
Oh, she opened the eyes of the Rookie and made him correctly

She was a wonderful Woman, while he was a common man,
She was a soldier's daughter, he of the Roving clan,
Her life had been spent with the army, practically all of her years,
While his had been spent in the big world, in the Valley of Strife and Tears.

But the few hours spent with the Woman the night that the Rookie called,
Were the happiest spent in ages, for the Army fetters galled.
They made the burden more easy and lifted him out of the hole
That was dark and deep and bottomless, a trap for the Rookie's soul.

They made him contented with camp life and his cot in the first squad tent,
Took the kink from out his shoulders, and straightened his legs that were bent,
Made his soul a beautiful image, instead of a sordid clod,
And brought him back to his real self and made him believe in God.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 45-47.

Did You Ever Do the Things We Do in Camp?

Did you ever eat your dinner when the rain was pouring down,
Sitting in the mess hall at a table long and brown,
With your mind upon a cafe back in your own home town,
While the non-coms watched you eating with a military frown?
No? Well we have to do these things right here in camp.

Did you ever have a non-com with two stripes upon his arm
Giving simple orders like a silly young school marm,
One who ought to be working on his uncle's dairy farm,
Far away from the German bullets that might cause him awful harm?
No? Well we have to do these things right here in camp.

Did you ever try to slumber on a little canvas cot,
In a great big O. D. tent when the sun was burning hot,
Where the bloody, bloomin' pesky ants were crawling awful thick,
And a vision of the corned beef hash would really make you sick?
No? Well we have to do these things right here in camp.

Did you ever have to dig a ditch to hold the surplus rain,
Make the water run up a hill and then run down again,
Dig until your aching back was yelling loud with pain,
And the typhoid in your punctured arm was swelling up a vein?
No? Well we have to do these things right here in camp.
Did you ever have to get permish to take a nice shower bath,
Get a pass to leave your camp and walk the narrow path,
Or get a pass to do a thing that's always aftermath,
And brave if you were passless the Colonel's awful wrath?
No? Well we have to do these things right here in camp.

Did you ever have to live in camp where everything's upset,
Where the wind is always windy and the rain is always wet,
Where everything is tangled in a big official net,
Where we always will remember the things we can't forget?
No? Well we have to do these things right here in camp.

Oh, the Nevers that you've never had to do,
May sound as if they weren't really true,
But honest what I've wrote,

Would surely get your goat,
If you were made to do the things we have to do.

But, here in the army camp,
They are putting on the clamp,
And real work is mingled daily with the fun,
They are making us all ready,
In a manner quick and steady,
For the day we'll cross the ocean and battle with the Hun.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 48–49.

Target Practice

Ever lie upon your belly with some other soldier pards,
Where the distance to the targets was just two hundred yards,

When the sun was shining brightly with a tantalizing glare,
And the dust was floating thickly in the heavy laden air?

Ever listen to the bullet with its whining, singing hiss,
Then have the chump who's scoring call your shot a perfect miss,
Ever try for ten straight bullseyes, what they call a perfect score,
And get when you had finished, eight twos, a three and four?

Ever lie upon your stomach in a rocky, sandy hole,
With your eye upon the target and the markers shifting pole,
With your sights a holding windage and the sling about your arm,
While your mind was wandering homeward to a little dairy farm?

Ever bring your eye to focus on the little spot of black,
With your elbow on a pebble and a kink within your back,
With your finger on the trigger and your shoulder on the stock,
While all your thoughts were dreading the recoil's awful shock?

Ever shoot at number seven when you should have shot at eight,
Then swear your army rifle never shot a bullet straight,
Ever shoot a string of bullets when you couldn't qualify,
And blame your awful shooting on a defect in your eye?

Ever keep right on shooting when the bugle blew, "Cease Fire",
And have the Colonel bawl you out with wrath and awful ire,
Ever shoot your string a standing when your nerves were all awry,
And a blur was creeping slowly o'er your aching, painful eye?

When your weak and limber finger lacked the strength to pull the trigger,
And you wished the little bull's eye was bigger, bigger, bigger,
When the firing of the rifles made your ear-drums fairly split,
And you knew without your firing you could never make a hit?

Ever ricochet a bullet from a pebble off the ground,
'Till it struck a perfect bullseye as it made a quick rebound,
Ever kneel with twenty others at two hundred rapid fire,
And pray like seven angels that your arms would never tire?

Ever hear the Colonel holler — "Get ready, load your guns",
And watch the targets dancing like a bunch of shaking suns,
Ever make two bullseyes running, then miss the target clean,
'Cause your arms and legs were wobbling like a European Queen?

Ever flinch when you were shooting and bump your bloomin' nose,
While the recoil of your rifle spoiled your perfect shooting pose,
Ever shoot the range for record and fail to qualify,
'Cause the shots that you were shooting, were a foot or so too high?

Ever try for Expert Rifleman and when all your shots were shot,
Find that Marksman at one sixty was all that you had got,
Ever shoot like William Cody from his seat upon a mount,
And find when you had finished, that your possible didn't count?

If you've never done these Evers, why it's not so awful strange,
'Cause you've never spent a week end upon the target range,
Never lived in pup tents and dined on Willie canned,
Never practiced for the German, or you would understand.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 50–52.

Our Soldier Chaplain

Men of the army, listen, you who are far from home,
Hark to what I have written in this crudely worded poem,
Read of what I have written, concerning a few brave men
Who fight Life's wonderful battles, with a prayer and a solemn Amen.

These are our chaplain soldiers who have answered the country's call,
They came with you men to the army camp, leaving their homes and all,
Men, whose religious teachings, concerning the Christ and the Lord,
Are far removed from the army, with its rifle, bullets and sword.

Catholic, Protestant, Christian, regardless of class and creed,
Came with you men to the army camp, because of the country's need.
Now listen to what I tell you, impress these words on your mind,
Concerning these men who are with you, men of a wonderful kind,

Remember the night you were thinking of the girl you had left behind,
The night that the blues were creeping and destroying your peace of mind,
The night you were cussing the army and longing for home again,
The turbulent feeling of madness, the grief and the awful pain.

What happened, oh men of the army, when the army feters galled?
Why you went from your tent in the darkness and the army chaplain called,
And he answered your call from the darkness, invited you into his tent,
And talked to you like a father, 'till all of your passions were spent.

He told you of Christ and His teachings, his wonderful gifts to men,
'Till you went from his tent to your little brown cot at peace with the world
once again,
Now listen you men who are married to the words I have written here,
Do you remember the night you were thinking of the wife and the babies dear?

The awful hot day and the drilling, that were rilling your minds with gloom,
And the thoughts of the German Kaiser, the battle and possible doom?
How you cussed and raved at the army, when you thought of the kiddies and
wife,
And your mind was a seething maelstrom and you damned all the German
strife.

Remember you men of the army, the nights I am naming here,
When you left your tent in a temper, with a sordid thought and a fear,
A fear that Uncle Sam's armies would sail o'er the ocean some day,

And the wife and the kiddies waiting, would know you had entered the fray.

Remember you men of the army, that night your patience was spent,
The wonderful man who soothed you as you sat with him in his tent,
The man of the God above you, the man who believes in the Lord,
The man who told you of Jesus who carried a flaming sword.

That man was your army chaplain, a very wonderful man,
Who came with you men to the army camp and joined your soldier clan,
The man whom you all will remember as the months and the years go by,
The man who filled you with comfort and dried the tear in your eye.

Oh, men of the regular army, the draft and the volunteers,
Remember your army chaplains, in this valley of Strife and Tears,
You've Colonels and Majors and Captains, who drill you with iron in the rod,
But the men who will take you farthest are the Chaplain soldiers of God.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 53–55.

A Soldier's Letter Home

Soldier Camp of U. S. A.—No Place or Time or Date

Dear Mother: I am writing, I know a trifle late,
But I have been so busy with the Soldier's daily grind
That I've neglected writing, but I know you will not mind;
When you've read what I am writing, you'll feel a whole lot better,
And I promise that hereafter I will write a daily letter.

Tell Sis she wouldn't know me, since I left our little town,
For the sun has surely baked me a most gorgeous, golden brown.
Tell Dad if he could see me, he would never cuss me more,
For oversleeping mornings, or neglecting any chore.
Tell little brother Bennie I've a pistol and a gun,
A really truly rifle, that wasn't made for fun.

Tell my sweetheart that I love her, when you see her, Mother dear,
That sleeping, drilling, working, I keep wishing she were here,
Tell Auntie that I thank her for the little wooden box,
The home-made jam and cookies, and the dozen knitted sox.
Tell Sis' fellow for me, if he wants to have some fun,
To join the U. S. army, and get himself a gun.

Tell Tom and Dick and Harry and strapping Jimmie Ceots,
That Uncle Sam is needing a million more recruits.
Just tell 'em what I'm writing, in this letter, dear, to you,
So that each and every one will know just what we do.
At five a. m. the bugle blows, the call to rise and dress;
At five-fifteen the morning run, at six a. m. the mess.

Hot cakes and syrup, coffee, spuds and bacon fried,
With sugar, milk and home baked bread to fill the space inside.
At half past six, Fatigue call sounds, the streets and tents are 'pliced,
Then we drill for two long hours, before we are released.
From nine a. m. 'till three p. m., we sleep and write and read.
Then we drill again, dear Mother, for it's drilling that we need.

The Post Exchange supplies our wants with almost anything,
We've a dandy club and reading room where we can go and sing.
We can get a pass to go to town, 'most any time we wish,
We've everything we want to eat, both plain and fancy dish.

We've a ball team, some boxing gloves, a wrestling match and craps.
We've each a little army cot, we sleep on after taps.

We've mess halls with mosquito net, shower baths that are divine.
Oh! there's nothing, Mother, which we have that isn't extra fine,
We've clothes galore for every need; Sunday, work or play,
We've a colonel who's a dandy, and a day on which they pay.
We've a hundred things, dear Mother, that I haven't room to mention,
A hundred things, dear Mother, that require our close attention.

We are happy and we're healthy, and we're learning to be men,
Such a chance to get a schooling, we may never have again.
Oh' I miss you, Mother darling, but I'm happy and content.
With the hours and weeks we're spending in the regulation tent,
'Cause I know I need the schooling I may never get again,
The school that takes the weaklings, and makes them into men.

Now, Mother dear, I've written you, a letter that is long,
"Efficiency's" the title of our regimental song,
We are waiting now and ready for the day we'll take a chance
With our brothers and the others on the plains of Sunny France.
We are waiting for the order that will bid us grab our guns,
For the day we'll lick the Kaiser and his fighting German Huns
Now I'll close with love and kisses, and a heart that's full of joy
And sign my name as always, 'Your Happy Soldier Boy,' '

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 56–58.

Sergeant Bill and the City Skunk

Bill was a pard who I'd met in the ranks,
Him with the long and skinny shanks,
Him with the hair that was tinged with gray,
And a look in his eyes always far away.

We were sittin' one night where the shrapnel plays,
On the edge of a trench that was turned edgeways,
And close to our feet lay one of our men,
Who would never fight in the war again.

A shrapnel slug from out of the air,
Had gone through his hat, his skull and hair,
And there he lay all red and white,
With his body dead and his soul in flight.

And Bill, as we sat in that terrible place,
Had a smile of joy on his grimy face,
And the smile was caused by that clod of chalk,
'Twas the body of it that made Bill talk.

"I've messed and I've slaved and I've toiled," said Bill,
' 'Till the soul in my body was ready to kill,
And the bones in my body just ached with pain,
And my hopes in life were banished and slain.

I've toiled in the heat 'mongst the desert's drouth,
'Till my tongue stuck fast to the roof of my mouth,
With my eyes bloodshot from the Hellish glare,
While death stalked near, but I didn't care.

'Cause the woman I'd married had thrown me down,
For a no good skunk, that hailed from town,
Where they've electric cars and paved highways,
And the nights made light as the summer days.

He'd come to my town when I was away
Lookin' for dirt that would wash a pay,
And give me a stake for a house and lot,
For the girl I'd married, the one named Dot.

I ain't blamin' her 'cause she fell for his guff.
Or 'cause she was made of weakling stuff,
She'd been married to me for five long years,
While I toiled for her in a sun that sears.

And my body was dried and baked and cooked,
Why, at thirty-five it was fifty I looked,
I'm not blamin her 'cause she went away,
With this two faced rattler and city jay.

'Cause I ain't got the heart to bawl her out,
For fear some day she might find it out,
It's him that I'm cussin', it's him that filled
My soul with hate. Yes I'm glad he's killed.

Not 'cause he took my girl named Dot,
But because he left her to die and rot
In the big Hellish city of pizen and lies,
Where the soul withers up and the body dies.

It's been ten years since my lady died,
And the pulse in my heart ceased beating inside,
But all through the years since she went away
I've hunted that skunk and I've learned to pray,

And the prayer that I'd taught to my inner mind,
Just asked the Lord to be just and kind,
And deliver to me the worthless life
Of the damned city skunk who stole my wife.

And now that the creature is layin' there,
I guess the Lord has answered my prayer,
And it is better he died that way,
For he died like a man, is all I can say."

And there in the trench, Bill bared his head
And offered a prayer for him who was dead,
And there where the roar of the guns never stop.
Old Sergeant Bill went "Over the Top."

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 59–61.

The Aroused Eagle

The Eagle's been aroused boys, he sure is fightin' mad,
He's screamin through the country, he's quit a bein' sad,

His feathers are all ruffled and his mouth is open wide,
His eye is flashin' awful and he's burnin' up inside.

He's been roostin' mighty peaceful, for many, many years,
With his mind a gettin' sadder, and his eyes a sheddin tears,
While he watched the warrin' nations, raisin Cain across the pond,
He was lookin' very careful, just a little bit beyond.

He was watchin' while the Germans were a sinkin' all our ships,
He was watchin' when the Mexicans were makin' many slips,
But now he's quit a watchin' 'cause he couldn't stand no more,
And he's screamin' through the country, for he's awful, awful sore.

He's in a fightin' humor and he has a right to be,
For he's fightin' with the Germans who live across the sea,
He needs two million fightin' men, Old Kaiser Bill to lick,
Two million husky soldiers, and he needs 'em mighty quick.

So, get in and help the Eagle, in a war he didn't start,
Join his mighty army and do your little part,
'Cause while he is a screamin' in a voice that's fightin' mad,
He needs two million soldiers and he needs 'em mighty bad.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, p. 62.

A Soldier's Vision of His Sweetheart and the Hills

Often here in this Hellish strife,
Here where the ways all part,
There comes a vision of you and the hills,
So plain that I want to start.
Fade the trenches and roaring guns,
Fade and pass away,
"Till I roam once more on the green hill tops,
Where we were wont to play.

Once more as of old I spend the day,
On the mountains wild and steep.
On the snow capped peaks and the pine clad slopes,
In the canyons wide and deep.
Oh! towering rocks, on your dizzy heights
Full many a day we've played,
And many a night in the bright star light We've fallen asleep unafraid.
The roaring stream as it dashes down,
Possesses a wonderful charm,
Oh! big out-doors, with your grassy floors,
Where we always felt free from harm.

Quickly the vision of mountain tops,
Fades with your features pale,
No more the hoot owl's sudden cry,
No more the wolf's wierd wail.

I'm back where the big guns never hush,
Living with hates and fears,
But deep in my heart, dear memories start,
That fill both my eyes full of tears.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, p. 63.

The Rantings of a Rookie

They have put me in the army,
'Cause they said I was a man,
To help them lick the Kaiser,
Yes, to lick him if we can.

They have promised active service,
But all that I have seen
Has been a pick and shovel,
Diggin' ditch and camp latrine.

The first thing in the morning
Is the bugler with his horn,
Arousin' you from slumber,
'Cause the nags must have their corn.

Then I curry them and brush them,
Feed them oats and hay,
Oh, a trooper in the army,
Does the same stunts every day.

The Sergeant says do this and that,
That horse is not a cow,
Forget about the swimmin' hole,
The fishin' and the plow.

I do the best I really can,
Therefore it is a shame
That when the horse kicks me a lick,
Yours Truly gets the blame.

Some day I'll be a general,
I'll dog the sergeants' trail,
I'll put him on the wood pile
And send him for my mail.

I'll work him in the kitchen
Peelin' spuds all through the morn,
Just to hear him swear and holler
And regret that he was born.

But what's the use of all these pipes,
I'm a rookie for all that,
It's, you bonehead, throw out your chest,
Reduce the surplus fat.

Put your heels together,
Head up and eyes to right,
Can't you savy English language,
By George! but you're a fright.

They forgot your brains when making you,
Cut out that mumbling; See,
Holy sufferin' cats and dogs,
Your arm is not your knee.

I'll drill you like a German,
I'll teach you right from left,
I'll pound some sense into your head
If I can find a cleft.

Oh! every hour and minute,
It seems I must be shown,
The sergeant keeps me at it
Like a bloomin' god of stone.

The mess is not like mothers,
The beans or stew or pork
Aren't cooked as mother cooks 'em
Back home in old New York.

But I have made improvements,
I have straightened up my back,
I've put some color in my cheeks,
The kind they used to lack.

I've took the kinks from out my mind,
And fixed my feet and knees,
I've put my wind in order
For the fight across the seas.

I'm feeling like a million beans,
Thanks be to Uncle Sam,
Of me he's made a soldier,
And by God a fighting man.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 64–66.

The Lost Water Hole and the Hidden Trail

What a Sergeant Told His Comrades as They Waited in the Trenches for the
Order to Go 'Over the Top'

Sergeant Bill was a husky man,
Born and bred of a fighting clan,
Man who belonged to the Big Out-of-Doors,
With the sky his roof and the soil his floors.

Thirty years old, heavy and tall,
The day he answered his country's call;
And that night in the trench where the big shells hiss,
The Sergeant, spoke and he told us this:

"I have sweltered in the blazing sun
On the deserts of the south,
I have watched the cattle dying,
During months of stifling drouth.

I have packed a mining outfit
On a desert nightingale,
And have faced a blinding windstorm
In a wind that blew a gale.

I have scratched the burning desert,
For the cursed yellow gold,
And have fought the deadly norther,
With its sleet and biting cold.

I have toiled and mucked and wandered,
In the blistering, killing heat,
With my canteen shy of water,
And not a thing to eat.

I have felt my tongue a swelling,
And my throat a growing dry,
While I watched the buzzards soaring
Far above me in the sky.

I have staggered 'cross the burning wastes In God's forgotten land,
With my feet all cut and blistered,
From the scorching yellow sand.

I have cursed the God above me,
And have damned my doubting soul,
As I searched the dried up desert,
For a tiny water hole.
"Then I found it".

I have labored and toiled in the frozen North,
With pick and shovel and pan;
And have washed the sand of many a creek,
And have finished where I began.

I have tramped the trails through the virgin snow.
With snow shoes, rifle and pack;
I have felt the cold like a stabbing knife,
As I lay in a trapper's shack.

I have faced a blizzard that raged and roared,
With the snow clean up to my knees;
I have felt my body grow chill and cold,
And my hands and feet all freeze.

I have mushed with the dogs eight hundred miles,
To a place near the Northern Lights,
And have counted a million gleaming stars,
That shone through the winter nights,

I have thawed the dirt with a raging fire,
And have dug in the heated ground,
Panning the mud, the rock and sand,
But never a thing I found.

I have lived on the meat of the white tailed deer,
With never a spud or flour,
And for six long weeks with a broken bone,
I have camped in an icy bower.

I have cursed the cold and the blinding snow,
The wind and its whining wail,
As I searched for a blaze on the pine and fir,
And a sign of the long lost trail.

"Then I found It".
The Lost Water Hole and the Hidden Trail,
In two extremes of the earth,

The finding of which have saved my life,
And broadened my mental girth.
Dying of thirst in the desert heat,
Cursing my God and my soul,
When all of the time the hand of Kim
Was drawing me near the Hole.
Freezing to death in the Arctic wastes,
With body and soul turned cold,
'Till an unseen hand showed me the trail,
And made me believe in God.
Years I have lived in the barren wastes,
Years in the city's strife,
But The Lost Water Hole and The Hidden Trail
Taught me the lesson of Life.
And now that I'm here with you soldier pals,
I never will falter or drop,
'Cause the Lost Water Hole and The Hidden Trail
Will carry me "Over the Top. "

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 67-70.

The Sour Slum

At times the Army mess
Was cooked by merely guess,
And the stuff they served the soldiers,
Sure would kill an Irish goat.
There were puddings, also pies,
That would never take a prize
For filling up the stomach
Underneath the army coat;
But the "slum" was sure the stuff
That would use a soldier rough
If he swallowed just a little
With the army's splendid grub.
But the day the "Slum" ' was sour
They howled with ten horse power,
And threatened him who made it
With a ducking in the tub.

"Not I", said the Cook, "' Cause I cooked the mess,
And I ought to know what I cooked, I guess."
"Not I", said the Sergeant of all the supplies,
"Why the taste of the stuff has caused me surprise."
"Not I", said the Corporal, who bossed the fatigue,
"I'm an old hand at cards, but I surely renige."
"Not I", said the Rookie on kitchen detail,
"I'm not the cause of this awful wail".
Now the wail was so loud and awfully long,
That the Captain was roused by the angry song;
So he strode from his tent, to the big mess hall,
And bade them be quiet, each one and all.
Here he soon learned the cause of the fuss,
And tasted the stuff that had made 'em cuss,
He gave them his verdict regarding the slum,
The souring of which had made things hum.
"It is", he said, and his gaze wandered far,
"A Spanish stew, made with vinegar."

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 71-72.

I Was One

I was one of the National Guards,
I and a thousand other pards
Sent to the border one July
To guard the nation and wonder why.

I was one of a thousand men
Who swore they would never enlist again;
When they mustered us out, after many days,
Of literal hell in the Mexican haze.

I was one who was surely sore,
"Never Again," was what I swore,
But now that there's come another squall,
I've answered again my country's call.

And now that our country is in dire need,
Of a million men of the fighting breed —
We've been first to answer, me and my pards,
And all the rest of the National Guards.

We've answered the call for volunteers,
Regardless of knowledge, service or years;
It wasn't of fighting that we grew ill —
'Twas simply the months of sitting still.

Inaction's the thing that gave us a pain,
And made us swear 'twould be never again,
But now — if there's fighting, no matter how hard,
The nation can count on the men of the guard.

We've been changed and shifted for very good cause —
But always the memory of who we was,
Will stick to the men who belonged to the guards,
Though we lost our names when they shuffled the cards.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, p. 73.

The Vital Need

Men of the Army, listen — old and the new recruit —
You men who are now in the army camps, learning to drill and shoot
Are here for a vital purpose, here for a crying need,
Here 'cause the nation needs you, even if you must bleed.
Your Uncle Sammy has chosen to step from the path of peace
Because of the cry of his allies, the cry that will never cease
Till the power of the German Kaiser and the fear of the submarine
Are wiped from the slate of Europe, in a manner both rapid and clean.

There are some who will speak of the billions of dollars we've loaned away,
To the allied powers of old Europe, so they can win the day;
There are some who will mention the foodstuffs we have shipped to the other
side,
To help feed their struggling armies, and bring them the victor's side —
There are some who have howled at the nation because it sent powder and guns
To help France, our sister republic, conquer and banish the Huns;
There are some in this big land of freedom who think that this war isn't ours,
Who have called Uncle Sammy un-neutral, for helping and feeding the powers.
There are some who are very pro-German in thinking and voicing their acts —

But these are the foolish pacifists, who won't see the reason and facts;
But, men of the Army, listen; while I speak of a few pert things,
Things concerning the countries that are ruled by Kaisers and Kings;
Things concerning their actions and the deeds they have ordered done,
Which the eyes of the world will vision after this war is won —
Take Kaiser Bill of the Germans, plutocrat, kaiser and king,
Ruler of sixty millions; why do his people sing?

Sing of his acts with ardor, sing of his mighty deeds,
Love him and do as he orders, while their country suffers and bleeds?
Listen! you men of the Army, while I answer as all of them might —
It's because the people of Germany believe their Kaiser is right.
'Tis thus with the Austrian people, the Turk and the Portugee,
With the French and the English millions, the Slav and the Arab free;
With the Roumanian and Bulgar peasant, the Scotch and the Irish breed;
With the millions of Uncle Sammy, the Mex. and the Japanese seed —
They feel they are right and willing to fight, so long as they b'lieve in the creed.
Love of their mother nation, bred in the blood and bone,
Ruled by a mighty sovereign — taught in a narrow zone;

Made to believe that the issue is one with the God above;
Blinded and deafened to real things, nurtured with hate,
not love.

'Tis thus that the German people — ruled with a fist of steel —
Facing the world with hatred, forced by a despot real
To fight with a desperation, to slaughter and murder and kill;
Forced by the law of tradition to bow to the Kaiser's will.

England and France and Russia, the Jap and the Portugee,
Roumania, Servia, Belgium, with the millions of Italy,
Held at bay by the Kaiser, backed by the German nation,
Fighting on land and water the balance of world creation;
Using the deadly U boat — steel shark with its fatal breath —
Sinking the ships of nations, sending their crews to death;
Flying their airships and Zeppelins, dropping their bombs of gas;
Using their poisoned vapors, watching the minutes pass —

Counting the days of slaughter, singing their song of hate,
Failing to see the writing, scrawled by the hand of Fate.
Men of the Army, listen! I'll mention the vital thing
That has pushed us into the world war and made us part of the ring
That will close on the German nation and drive them back from the brink
Of final total destruction — we are the missing link —
Link in the chain of nations that will smother the power of Prussia
And open the eyes of its people, 'till they see as they did in Russia.
'Tisn't the greed of conquest, it isn't the feel of might,
'Tis the knowledge that Uncle Sammy has chosen to do what's right.
You are the men of the Eagle, you are the men who'll do;
You are the life of our nation, wonderful men and true —
A million like you are needed and maybe a million more,
To fill up the armies of Uncle, now that the nation's at war.
Men of the Army, harken — old timer and new recruit —
You men of the countless legions dressed in your O. D. suit.

Ye have answered the call of country, you are willing to do your bit;
You have answered, " Yeoh, " at the roll call, you have showed where you really
fit.

You have blazed the way for the millions, you have answered to duty's call,
You have placed the life of the nation above mother, sweetheart and all —
You're a wonderful bunch of humans and God, with his keener sight,
Will save you a place 'mongst His legions for helping to do what's right.

Democracy's war 'gainst the kaisers, the kings and the despot's sway,
Will bring to the world, with banners unfurled, lasting peace that will never
give way.

So here's three cheers for you, men of the Army — three cheers for our Eagle in
flight;
We've joined the fray and we're in it to stay, 'till we prove to the Germans we're
right.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp.
74–77.

The Soldier's Christmas in the Army Camp

Yours is the post of duty — of danger too,
Yours is the work what only a man can do,
So Attention! Eyes Front! — and see it through,
All our country wishes a Merry Christmas to you.

Your tent is not a palace home, just a canvas dwelling
Wherein you spend the lonesome days that Fate is surely spelling.
All homely is your daily fare, of beans and spuds and bread;
It lacks the zest that banquets gave, in days that long are dead.
The hours flit by, each with it's care, all mindful of the fray,
'Till brightly o'er the army camp there dawns the Christmas day.

Heigho! my brother, you who were so glum but yesterday,
Throw off the dark and gloomy spell and for a while be gay.
Let's turn the mess hall table into a gay and festive board,
With home made pie and turkey brown and other dainties stored.
Then listen to your chaplain's grace, 'ere you the meal attack,
Let your minds fill in the things the feast does really lack.

The turkey's real, it sure is fine, so pass your mess kit plate;
No king e'er ate a better bird, in regal robes of state.
Sweet potatoes, crisp and brown, oysters in a stew,
With cranberries cooked in such a way that grandma only knew.
Pies of mince, and pumpkin too, and pudding plump and steaming,
Ye Gods! men of the army, it sure beats all your dreaming.

Oh, Christmas day in the army camp will fill you all with cheer;
It surely differs greatly from some others in the year,
You are the men who must answer while your thoughts are far away,
Back in the homes you came from, on this glorious Christmas day.
Strive each day for contentment, 'tis an art that is almost lost,
Try to be cheerful and happy, and forget the pain and the cost.

Now soldiers of Uncle Sammy, just strive for the noble things;
Learn to be simple and kindly, no matter what trouble brings.

Remember that goodly deeds are written in letters of gold,
And never forget the teachings your mother did once unfold.
To every soldier of Uncle., as the hours are swiftly fleeting,
Your country sends you a Christmas wish and a happy New Year greeting.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 78–79.

Song of the Real German-American

I loved Thee, Kaiser, once — long, long ago.
Long, long ago, my memory held you dear;
But now your actions, Kaiser, have unveiled mine eyes.
I have looked deep into thine, your actions, Kaiser, now are clear.
I no longer wonder why it is that true love dies,
I loved Thee, Kaiser, once — long, long ago.
I loved Thee, Kaiser, let the dead past go,
You shall not fill my future life with fears.
Why shouldst I believe lie after lie,
Or let what was darken all the coming years.
Because I fain would break my Fatherland's dear tie,
I loved Thee, Kaiser, once — long, long ago.
There was a time when Germany and you
Were looked upon by me as kind and true,
And when I chose to cross the restless sea,
And live my life where men are always free,
My love for you and the Fatherland was strong,
Der Wacht am Rhine was yet my favorite song.
Then came the war, and as the days went by,
I heard and saw with ear and eye,
The things you ordered done and said,
And now my love for you is dead.
I loved Thee, Kaiser, once — long, long ago,
Long, long ago my memory held you dear.
But now, Kaiser, I have come to know.
The path I tread before me stretches clear,
'Tis not the country of my birth that calls,
But the voice of Him who guides the destined fates,
And as I watch the finger as it scrawls,
I go to fight for my United States.
I loved Thee, Kaiser, once — long, long ago.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 80–81.

Supposing and Didn't

Written for the Benefit of Certain Narrow-Minded People Who Think We Are
Committing a Crime by Helping England

Supposing the maw of the British Lion,
Once opened for us full wide,
Didn't her ally, Republican France,
Fight with us side by side?

Supposing Old England years ago tried
To crush us beneath her heel,
Didn't the French with their Fleur-de-lis,
Show us a friendship real?

Supposing we licked the British Lion twice,
For pulling our Eagle's tail,
Didn't the French, when we needed 'em bad,
Prove that they wouldn't fail?

Supposing the British were greedy and cruel
In the years of the dimming past,
Didn't the French with their Lafayette
Help when the die was cast?

Supposing the British and didn't the French
Are factors that help us determine
That watching and waiting, with submarine baiting,
Won't do with Wilhelm, the German.

For

Supposing the Germans continue to sink
All the ships on the face of the ocean?
Supposing we sit, never doing our bit
To help put an army in motion?

Supposing we feel that the war isn't real,
But simply an awful nightmare?
Supposing we shirk all the trouble and work.
And say that we really don't care?

Supposing we lag and continue to brag
We can lick everything in creation?
Supposing we wrote another nice note
To Bill of the bold German nation?

Now

Wouldn't we feel that the menace was real
If our homes were really attacked?
Wouldn't we rise with hate in our eyes
If our towns were raided and sacked?

Wouldn't We roar and feel awful sore
If our mothers and sweethearts and wives
Were murdered and raped, and streamers were draped,
Of death on our loved one's lives?

We would

We'd rise in our might and Kaiser Bill fight,
If only with bare clenched fist.
We're beginning to feel that the menace is real,
But we don't see the need to enlist.

We brag and we lag, like a man with a jag,
Without any reason or fear,
But we don't realize the nearness or size,
Or maybe we'd go volunteer.

With England and France we'll carry the lance
As soon as we see the real light,
And we'll bring to the world, with banners unfurled,
Lasting peace when we finish the fight.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 82–83.

The Rookie's Nightmare

On a day so hot you'd stifle
And the barrel upon your rifle
Would burn a bloody blister on your hand;
When the wind was blowing southward,
And the sand was drifting mouthward,
While a pall of desolation seemed to cover all the land,

A Rookie who had weak knees,
Overcome by sand and hot breeze,
In the camp of Uncle Sammy 'cross the deep and briny seas,
Decided he would slumber,
In his tent of O. D. umber,
On his little canvas cot, that would rest his head and knees.

He sighed as he reclined there,
With his thoughts upon the lone lair
Of the Kaiser, who had caused him to be brought from home and friends
To the land of sunny France,
Where you take a fighting chance,
In the atmosphere where shrapnel with the smoke of battle blends.

He was itching to be going,
When he heard a bugle blowing,
And the shouting of some orders for the men to get their arms;
Then the scurrying and hurrying,
With the days of awful worrying,
As the regiment he belonged to marched across the German farms.

He was always in the battle,
'Neath the bloody shrapnel rattle,
Always where the fighting was the thickest and the worst;
But he fought them on the level,
Though he fought them like the devil,
Where the shells would shriek in midair many minutes 'fore they burst.

One day when they were planning A monstrous German tanning
That the Huns would sure remember 'till it came their time to die;
The Rookie was a standing
Near a much used river landing,
When the Kaiser 'cross the waters in a dugout he did spy.

Now he didn't stop to reason,
For the Kaiser was in season,
He was wanted for the murders of the many millions dead;
So he swam the chilly river,
Though its waters made him shiver,
And trailed old Kaiser Wilhelm to a shell hole's muddy bed.

There with naked hands he fought him,
Defeated him and caught him,
Then fetched him to the Colonel, in a manner all his own;
His brave deed was related,
And the Rookie was elated
When they pinned upon his bosom an honor cross that shone.

He was given a commission,
But through some darn fool omission
Was only made a major for his work and nothing more;
He felt that he'd been cheated,
Sure insulted and mistreated,
Which peeved him very muchly and made him awful sore.

He was surely disappointed,
And his mind became disjointed
When he thought how single handed he had captured Kaiser Bill.
He was sure he'd been derided,
So one day he quick decided
That his life blood in the trenches he would very quickly spill.

So he grabbed his trusty knife,
Was about to take his life
For the way he had been treated by the whole official lot.
When he heard an awful yell,
And the ringing of a bell,
Which 'woke him from his slumber, in his tent upon his cot.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 84–86.

When You Feel the U. S. Calling

Did you ever cross the ocean to a distant foreign land,
Where you spent the days aroaming on a strange, peculiar strand,
In the Alps, or Monte Carlo, or Sahara's burning sand,
'Till you yearned for Yankee Doodle as it's played by Sousa's band?

Did you ever wander far from home 'till your steps began to drag,
Ever have a homesick feeling that caused your thoughts to sag,
Ever hear a foreign subject talk and laugh and brag,
Then catch a glimpse of bunting and see our honored flag?

Did you ever tempt the Gods above and all the varied fates
While roaming in a foreign land on schedule time and dates,
Then meet a man who shook your hand, the best of any mates,
Who told you that he came from home — the old United States?

Did you ever meet in old Paree a girl whose name was Hanner,
Who said she came from dear New York, with free and easy manner,
Whose father's name was Hiram Jones, the million dollar tanner;
Then hear a French band play with zest the Old Star Spangled Banner?

If you have — if you did —
You'll remember Yankee Doodle, and the flag will cause you joy,
And the old U. S. will call you 'till you're once again a boy,
The foreign strand and people you will discard like a toy;
You will board a home bound steamer and holler "Ship Ahoy".

For, no matter where you ramble, far across the bounding sea,
Your thoughts will always travel to the land where men are free;
And the flags of foreign nations won't bring a thrill to you
Like our own Star Spangled Banner, of red and white and blue.

It's the only flag in all the world, it belongs to you and me,
It represents a nation whose men are brave and free.
The white stripes are for purity, the red to show our might,
The stars upon a field of blue to show the world we're right.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 87–88.

Off to France

Dedicated to the Officers and Men of the United States Armies

Men of the Army, you're leaving, leaving for foreign lands,
Leaving the home of our nation to fight on the foreign strands.
The order has come from the High Ups who sit in the Government chair,
That a million of you are needed to help our allies there.

You are ordered for foreign service to fight for your country' » flag;
You belong to the choosen units, who have never been known to lag.
When a crisis was facing our country, and there really was work to do,
You men have proved to the nation your breed was loyal and true.

When we faced the Mexican crisis and Villa was running amuck
You crossed the line with your orders, never once cussing the luck
That took you over the border to the land God made and forgot,
Where the soul of a man gets morbid and his body is wont to rot.

You've been gathered from all the corners, from city and country town,
And you've drilled in the rain and sunshine with many a curse and frown —
The curse for the damned inaction and the frown I think for the same,
For the thought of the Hill and its freedom, you weren't at all to blame.

You have prayed for the day of action and the boom of the monstrous guns,
As you lined them up for battle, with the Turks and Bulgars and Huns.
You have wanted to get into action somewhere in a battle trench,
And now your prayer has been granted, you are going to help the French.

You are going to cross the ocean and battle on foreign soil,
Where the will of the German Kaiser has welded a Prussian coil,
Where the flower of the German army is holding the world at bay—
You men of the U. S. army are going to enter the fray.

You are blazing the trail for the others, treading the path of right,
Showing the German Kaiser that we are willing to fight;
To fight with our men and money, for a cause that we know is true,
Beneath our star spangled banner, the red, the white and the blue.

Some of you men are old timers, some of you new recruits,
But all of you men are real soldiers dressed in your o. D. suits,
You belong to the U. S. army and it's name is surely enough
To prove to the German Kaiser that you're made of the proper stuff.

You're the breed that will go into battle, with never a murmur or whine,
And never give up till they kill you, a foot of the fighting line.
The guns of the U. S. army will boom on the western front,
Pounding the lines of the Germans, bearing their share of the brunt.

Now men of the U. S. army, we're wishing you all God speed,
You are going to fight for freedom and raise Democracy's creed,
You have answered the call of country, every darn one of you,
And when the time comes for your doing you'll do as you're told to do.

This war, that has drawn the nations from every corner o earth,
Will bring to the front our manhood and show them our country's worth,
And you men of the U. S. army, who sail for a foreign shore,
Will fight 'till the peace of nations is brought to the world once more.

So here's to your Generals, Colonels and Majors, your Captains and
Lieutenants too,
And here's the real wish of a nation, we're wishing for all of you;
May the spirit of right never leave you, may your thoughts and your legs never
lag,
May you always remember your country and the home of your glorious flag.

Now men of the Fighting U. S. A, we're bidding you all goodbye,
And we know you will go to the war front determined to do or die,
With the help of the God above you and the millions of other men,
You'll fight with your might 'till lasting peace is brought to the world again.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 89–92.

The Human Forest

Note — All soldiers are men.

Men are like trees in a forest,
And God put them both on earth;
Some of them giants without blemish,
Others weak saplings at birth.
Some of them rise above others,
Spreading their limbs far on high;
The majority reach the same average,
The weaker ones struggle and die.
Some are shattered by lightning,
Others are rotten, yet thrive,
Some appear shrunken and lifeless,
When we know that they are alive.
There are some who die in the rich soil,
Others that thrive on a rock,
Some are cut down for their lumber,
Still others are felled by a shock.
Some are marked by The Cruiser,
While others he just passes by,
For many a one is worthless,
Though it holds its head near the sky.
Some absorb all the moisture,
Taking much more than they need,
Killing the younger and weaker,
Destroying the new sprouted seed.
Some get their strength from the foul soil,
Others draw theirs from the pure,
While others by means artificial,
Are enabled this life to endure.
On some grow the fruits that are needed,
On others the fruit is a fake,
Still others bear fruit that is deadly,
Killing all those who partake.

Yes, men are like trees in a forest,
And God put them both on the earth,
And when the day comes for the judging,
He will judge them all by their worth.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, p. 93.

The Hard-Boiled Rookie

Hard Boiled as they make 'em, was red headed Dan
When he joined the ranks of the soldier clan,
From the slums of a city, where law puts a ban
On all that is good in the heart of a man.

Cuffed and kicked from childhood to youth,
Taught an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,
Where life is a lie that kills all the truth,
And the big things that matter are smothered, forsooth.

Thus was Dan when he answered the call,
Big of bone and six feet tall,
Naught but the mind of him was small,
And it wasn't runt'd beyond recall.

The machine gun Batt was what he drew,
One of the bunch called the "suicide crew",
Because of the Lewis and what it would do,
When you fed it up to a hundred or two.

He took to the work from the very first day,
The drill and fatigue were to him like play,
And just as long as he had his own way
The lad was happy and always gay.

But woe to the man who crossed his path,
And did a thing that aroused his wrath,
'Twas a battle royal for him "Who Hath"
And to hell with the present or aftermath.

Now our "Top" was a swelled up, ornery cuss;
I've seen 'em better, but seldom "wuss",
Seemed like he gloried in making a muss,
And stirrin' up a company fuss.

He'd roar at us men 'till our dander boiled,
And our pleasure in life was duly spoiled,
While our clothes were dusty and very much soiled
By the daily drill through which we toiled.

He was a husky and full of Pep,
And he acted thus 'cause he had a Rep
For keeping his men in the proper step,
With his bulldog voice and his roaring "Hep."

He didn't like Dan, but he understood
That the lad could fight, and he surely could,
So he nagged him not and treated him good
As he knew how, for fear he would.

But that wasn't the way he treated Jim,
One of our squad, who was frail and slim;
He was always getting the goat of him,
And threatening to pull him limb from limb.

Now the army's a place where all ain't gold,
And a fellow learns to do as he's told,
So we stood for the Top and the way he'd scold,
'Till our eyes saw red and our blood ran cold.

Came the day of the order to take a hike
Twenty miles for men and mules on the pike;
'Twas a thing we'd cuss, but we had to like,
While the Top went along on a motor bike.

We'd reached a point and were ready to drop,
When the whistle blew for the bunch to stop,
And there on the sands we took a flop,
And used our sleeves for the sweat to mop.

Jim, whom I've mentioned, pale of face,
Had dropped behind, couldn't stand the pace,
Though he came from an old and fighting race
That had held their own and won a place.

His feet were sore and his body damp
When he reached the sight of our "Pup" tent camp,
Where the Sergeant started to rave and stamp
And called him a yellow, no good tramp.

Jim took the naggin' with lips held tight,
The same as he had every day and night,
'Till he called Jim a name that always means fight
And the lads eyes blazed, and his face was a sight.

He reached the Top with one quick bound,
Called him a bully and yellow hound,
Hit him a crack, Oh! the joyful sound
When he knocked him flat on the dusty ground.

But the Top was tough if he wasn't bold,
And he fought dirty, the way he'd scold;
As he rose from the ground his hand took hold
Of a big iron stake, and he knocked Jim cold.

With a sick'ning thud he hit the sod,
The sense of him gone, like a poor dead clod,
And the Top just once on his body trod,
When I heard a whoop and a "Now, by God".

Just seen a streak as the form went by,
Red the hair and red in the eye,
Saw it land on the back of the Sergeant high,
'Twas red headed Dan, the Hard Boiled Guy.

Now there's no use describin' that fight by round,
'Cause there wasn't but one on that dusty ground,
Dan treated the Top like a yellow hound.
Who was doomed to die in the city pound.

He handled the Top in a manner quite rough,
Made him eat all his words, and called his bluff,
Made him say he was yellow and rotten stuff,
'Till the Top, awful battered, hollered enough.

'Twas six weeks later we'd all reached France,
We were fixed in a trench just waitin' the chance
To pepper the Huns and make 'em dance,
When the order came for a quick advance.

Over the top we went that night,
Where the rockets glared with a sudden light,
And the big shells broke to the left and right;
Oh! we gave 'em Hell, in a hellish fight.

Jim was killed, with a dozen more,
And the ground was damp with the blood and gore
Of the German Huns — we had killed a score,
When the Top went down on the bloody floor.

Drilled clean through by a sharp steel nose
That had found his body through all his clothes,
And there in the trench of our German foes,
The Top was left with the stark dead rows.

Left 'till a bloody and tattered man,
One of the last from a fighting clan,
Happened the Top on the ground to scan,
Imagine the soul of Hard Boiled Dan.

He lifted the Top with hasty care
Onto his back with a feelin' rare,
And carried him back through the hellish glare
To us with the Gats a waitin' there.

Hard boiled as they make 'em was Red headed Dan,
When he joined the ranks of our soldier clan,
Rough and ready but built on the plan
That makes a soldier a real, real man.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 94–99.

Though Parted

I am just a common soldier,
'Mongst a million other men,
And we're camping here in trenches
Near the awful slaughter pen.

But it doesn't seem to matter much
In what land I do reside,
Your voice the chords of absence touch,
Your face is at my side.

To me the tiny flowers that grow Beneath the shrapnel screen
Yield a memory of your lips,
With many sweets between.

The dusky trench nights all remind
Me of your glorious hair,
The rockets bursting are your eyes
That shone with love-light rare.

Three thousand miles today divide
From us the things most dear,
Yet love dwells always in my heart,
Exiled and doomed I fear.

The message that I send you, girl,
From where the big guns play,
May cheer and bless your life again,
As in the olden day.

Many moons have come and gone
Since we kissed and said good-bye,
Your trembling arms I now recall,
The tear drops in your eye.

For days and months I've never failed
To write a wee, short note,
My love for you will never die,
Was what I always wrote.

Sometimes I think it hardly fair,
Your heart strings so to wrench,

By writing you such sentiment
From battle field and trench.

But when our country called for men,
'Twas all that I could do,
To answer with the others,
And say good-bye to you.

Today I saw another girl,
Her eyes were limpid blue,
I started when I saw her,
She looked so much like you.

Her smile, her hair, her features,
Her shining eyes of blue,
Brought back the past to me so clear,
I thought that she was you.

So please forgive the lad you knew.
And forget what you have missed,
This little French girl that I met,
Was hugged and duly kissed.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 100–101.

Will You?

Dedicated to the Slacker

Young men of Uncle Sammy, will you hesitate to act,
When your country is a calling and war is now a fact?
Will you wait until the country has been fighting for a year
Before you cease your talking and come and volunteer?

Will you let 'em say the men and boys of Uncle Sammy's land
Are naught but spineless humans, who lack the fighting sand?
Will you let 'em cast aspersions on our noble ship of state,
Because you failed to volunteer until it was too late?

Will you sit and watch the other men a marching to the front
To fight for Uncle Sammy and bear the work and brunt?
Will you side step the real issue when your country is in need
Of a million husky youngsters of the Eagle's fighting breed?

Will you calmly read the story of the man who bravely dies
While protecting Uncle's country from the acts of German spies?
Will you shirk your vital duty when the nation needs you bad,
And become a cowardly human, and a sneaking, cringing cad?

Will you whine and talk and holler and show a yellow streak,
'Cause your minds won't see the Shadow, and your knees are awful weak?
Or will you change your tactics and with no thought of hesitation
Join your fellow soldiers in the ranks of Uncle's nation?

The Will Yous and the Won't Yous confront you all today,
The women all are waiting for the action that will say,
My sweetheart, son or brother is a man clear through and through,
And he's gone beneath the banner of our own red, white and blue.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 102–103.

The One and Only Sport

As the Young Millionaire Rookie Thinks

I have hunted in the mountains
For game both large and small,
I've hollered at a ball game
'Till I couldn't yell at all,
I've watched the ponies running,
With my money bet on place,
And have seen Jess Willard pounding On another fellow's face.
I've gazed on autos racing,
When a slip meant sudden death,
And have rode the roller coaster,
When I couldn't get my breath;
I have played the games of tennis,
Football and hockey too,
And have stalked the lion and tiger
Where the jungle breezes blew.
I have also played at billiards,
Shuffle board and pool,
And have bumped the bumps at Coney,
Like a crazy headed fool.
I have sailed boats on the oceans,
The rivers and the lakes,
And have played the game of poker For mighty handsome stakes.
I have seen 'em busting bronchos,
And have flown in the air,
I have ridden on a trolley
And never paid my fare.
At ping pong and at marbles,
I've also tried my hand,
And I've done Atlantic City,
Where I heard old Sousa's band.
I have shot craps with the fellows,
When a seven wouldn't roll,
And have played golf with a caddie,
While I cussed the seventh hole.
I have tasted some of liquors,
Whiskey, beer and wine,

And have watched the Dollies dancing,
Where the lights of Broadway shine.
I have rode the swift toboggan,
And have skied the snowy hill,
I have hunted for the mallard,
When there wasn't one to kill.
Some of these sports are dangerous,
But all of them are nice,
And for every one I've mentioned,
You will pay a given price,
But the sport that has them cheated,
And backed right off the hill,
Is where you hunt the Germans
And their bloody Kaiser Bill.
I'm glad I joined the army,
Left the useless, daily grind,
Wiped from out my memory
The things I left behind,
I'm learning to be useful,
And I'm sure a better sort
Since I've joined our Uncle's army
For the One and Only Sport.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 104–105.

The Soldier's Cigarette

Sometimes when I'm lonely I pick up my pen
And write of the trials of the brave soldier men;
Sometimes when I'm lonely and filled full of fret,
I smoke in the tent a mild cigarette.

The cigarette soothes me and brings to my mind,
Memories of days filled with deeds that were kind,
While the trials and the troubles, about which I write,
Destroy all the sunshine and turn day into night.

The life that we're leading is not full of snaps,
From the Reveille rising 'Till the bugle blows taps,
So I think I'll quit writing of days with regrets,
And devote all the time to my mild cigarettes.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, p. 106.

Men of the Army, We'll Do It

Oh, men of the U. S. army, these words that I've written here
May cause you to doubt, but you're bound to find out
The truth, though it may take a year.
Our country's at war, as it was thrice before,
With a nation across the big pond,
And the power we now face is the strong German race,
That is held by its Kaiser in bond.
It is facing the world, with banners unfurled,
It is holding our allies at bay;
They are fighting the fight, 'cause they believe they are right,
Regardless of things that we say.
They continue quite strong as the days move along,
This fact we can't longer deny,
It's plain to be seen, that the dread submarine,
May win them the war by and bye.
The English and French have reached their last trench,
The Russians are crying for peace,
The Swiss and the Swedes are voicing their needs,
And praying that war will soon cease.
The Bulgar and Turk continue to work,
The Italians are starving they say,
The Serbs and the Greeks are counting the weeks
'Till the coming of peace that will stay.
Portugal, Spain, have both felt the drain,
And the Dutch have been threatened and cuffed,
The Belgians have died by Roumanians side,
While old Norway has surely been bluffed.
The wily old Jap has been taking a nap
While all of this slaughter occurred.
Over there in the East he is planning a feast
For the Future that hasn't been stirred.
The Mexican Goose, with Villa still loose,
Is hissing and napping it swings,
And our Eagle's in flight, for a cause that is right,
And war is the song that it sings.
War on the Kaiser, who thinks he is wiser
Than all of the nations on earth;

His submarine war, and several things more
Have made him belittle our worth.
He don't give a damn for our Uncle Sam
Because he still believes in his might,
And he knows very well, what we don't have to tell,
That Uncle's not ready to fight.
We're sure unprepared in this war we've declared,
We've little except heaps of cash,
But we're made of the stuff that will fight, sure enough,
As soon as we learn how to splash.
But we've got to learn how, and we must commence now,
To build us an army of men,
From a million to five, if we want to survive,
And bring the world peace once again.
Men of the army, listen, it will take less than a year
To gather the men from hill, dale and glen
To battle the German fear.
We must take the recruit and teach him to shoot,
And show him the way he should drill.
He must be instructed in a way well conducted
Before he will know how to kill.
Discipline strong will bring him along,
Until he's a fighting machine
That's able to cope with a feeling of hope
The deadly and cursed submarine.
We'll have to send men to the big slaughter pen
To fight for this country of ours,
And it may take us years, and cost us some tears
To fight with our allied powers.
But men of the army, we'll do it, the Kaiser and Germans will rue it,
We'll take our old flag, the blessed old rag, and go to Europe and do it,
We'll muster a million men, if they need 'em we'll muster ten.
We'll go to the front and help bear the brunt and bring to the world peace
again.
We'll have to leave mothers and wives, put our sweethearts out of our lives,
And lucky he'll be, in this land of the free, who goes through it all and survives.
Just now our army is small, but the draft will gather them all;
The rich and the poor, will have to endure and answer the country's call.
Every one of us must be a man who belongs to the fighting clan;

The coward and the slacker, won't have any backer to keep him out of the van.
You men who are now in the army, have blazed for others a trail;
It leads through the country and cities, it winds over mountain and dale,
And those who follow your footsteps in the months and the years to come
Never will fail as they march on the trail to martial music and drum.
The North will furnish it's legions, the men of the South won't lag,
And the East and West will give of their best to fight for Uncle Sam's flag.
Now men of the army, listen, it may be that we're unprepared,
But the soldiers of Uncle Sammy have proved to the world they dared,
To fight for the cause of freedom and battle for what is right,
They'll do their bit and never will quit as long as the Eagle's in flight.
The years to come will bring surcease, for the God of War is the God of peace;
He is showing us what to do,
And He'll guide us right in this mighty fight, for a cause that we know is true.

no

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 107–110.

The Love of Country

The love of country — I will give it my life.
This old world is full of those who chatter much
And say but little, of those who boast but never da,
Of those who shout and rave and talk, but never act.
Of the pleasures and painted things they will not
Leave they tell. But when their country calls
They ne'er respond. The ever present emptiness
Of heart and soul, which makes a farce of life,
And jars it with a false note of hypocrisy;
All this I leave behind, not suddenly, nor without
A feeling of keen remorse for what I really like,
Nor because I tire of worldly things that bring me joy,
But because my country needs me with a million more,
And I crave to be of use where men are needed.
I long for just one chance to smite old Kaiser Bill
A vital blow, that when struck will bring a lasting
Peace to this old planet on which I live and laugh and love.
To those who shirk and hide and fail to do
Their bit, I speak these words, "You all are cowards.
You would sit and fail to raise a helping hand
While Uncle Sam was kicked and mauled and spat upon. "
Give me the chance to do was all I asked. They gave,
And when it did come my turn I did not hesitate to act.
I left my home, my mother and the girl I loved,
And now each day I drill and sweat and learn to shoot
A gun, and the white arms of her that 'round my neck entwined
When I said good bye — I feel, and the lips of her, pressed
To mine, whisper that she understood just why,
And, understanding, shared with me the patriotic spirit
That bid me go unto the front and fight, and if
Necessary to die for my country which I love.
ill

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, p. III.

Of 'Me und Gott'

Of "Me und Gott", the Kaiser sang,
In voice both loud and clear,
'Twas when Victoria ruled the Isles,
And filled his soul with fear.
Her mighty fleet then ruled the seas,
They rule them yet, I wot,
They've bottled in the Keil Canal,
The ships of "Me und Gott".

Of "Me und Gott", the Kaiser sang,
His voice was never hushed.
His mighty legions, Bismark's boast,
The flower of France had crushed,
But now the people that he whipped,
In Alsace and Lorraine,
Have driven from him his "Goot Gott",
And filled his soul with pain.

Of "Me und Gott" the Kaiser sang,
His words were always boasts,
He laughed and sneered at Russia's land.
And belittled all their hosts,
But now the Russians hold his lines,
Though three million he has killed,
And "Me und Gott" no longer reign
Where all this blood's been spilled.

Of "Me und Gott", the Kaiser sang,
When Belgium felt his heel,
Most ev'ry day the song was heard,
From Dardenelles to Keil,
When Roumania lost her fertile plains,
When Servian kingdom fell,
'Twas "Me und Gott", the Kaiser sang,
Not the "Devil, Me und Hell".

Of "Me und Gott", the Kaiser sang,
The song rang through creation;
He sang it when his submarines,

Sunk boats of ev'ry nation,
He sang it when our ships were sunk,
Our sons and daughters drowned,
When Uncle Sam was passive,
And the Nation merely frowned.

But now the Kaiser's ceased to sing,
His song is never heard,
'Cause Uncle sure is angry,
And his fighting blood is stirred.
The Kaiser started something,
That he always will regret,
For when this war is finished,
He will need "His Gott", you bet.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 112–113.

One of the Millions

Here lies a soldier — name unknown,
Grave just marked by a pile of stone.
He died for the country that gave him birth,
To him 'twas the best on the face of the earth,
He answered the call of his native land,
Though the call he never could understand.
This soldier once had a place in life,
Played his part during peace and strife,
Had his hopes and his joys and fears,
Tasted of love with its smiles and tears,
But he careth little methinks today,
Now that he's dead and laid away
In a grave that is marked by a pile of stone,
Nameless, forsaken, but not alone.
"Here lies a soldier", with a million more,
Victim of Power and Greed and War.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, p. 114.

The Eagle's Song

The Song of the Hundred Million

Whoo-Whee-Ya Whoo-Whee-Ya Whoo-Whee-Ya —
Hear the Eagle! Hear him screeching !
See him winging far on high,
Hear the flapping of his feathered wings,
See the flashing of his eye.
The dove of peace has vanished,
The olive branch is bare,
All peaceful thoughts are banished,
The Eagle's in the air.

Whoo-Whee-Ya Whoo-Whee-Ya Whoo Whee-Ya—
'Tis Uncle Sammy's Eagle,
The noblest of all birds;
He is flying o'er the country,
He is screeching fighting words.
His wings are flapping awful,
His eye is flashing fire,
He is fighting with the nation
That filled his soul with ire.
Whoo-Whee-Ya Whoo-Whee-Ya — -Whoo-Whee-Ya—
His tail is shy some feathers,
But his wings are mighty strong;
His beak is snapping loudly,
As he sings the old war song,
His fighting blood is coursing,
And he's calling to his men,
'Cause the gun and sword of battle
Have replaced the ink and pen.
Whoo-Whee-Ya Whoo-Whee-Ya Whoo-Whee-Ya—

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, p. 115.

Hot Bricks vs. Cold Feet

An Incident in the Life of a Certain Regular Army Officer, While on Detached Service with a National Guard Organization on the Mexican Border, January 1917

This is a story founded on fact,
And the telling of it requires some tact;
It won't bring the captain glory or fame,
So I'll never mention his real, real name.

It seems on these bright, cool winter nights,
When the Milky Way all the Heaven lights,
That the frost descends with a chilling hand,
And chills the soldier to beat the band.

It chills some through when they've been to town
With a dear little girl, quite neat,
As they return to camp in the wee, sma' hours
With a chill in both of their feet.

It happened thus with this captain bold,
That he came to his tent with his feet quite cold,
That he had cold feet was a funny fix;
It surprised them all, for he sure could mix.

But his feet were cold as a country hicks,
So he ordered his man to heat some bricks,
To heat some bricks until they were hot,
And place the same on the foot of his cot.

Now the man when he learned Cap's feet were cold,
Heated the bricks as he'd been told,
And when they were heated and paper wrapped
Took them to the tent where the captain napped.

And wrapped in paper the bricks with heat,
Were tucked in close to the captain's feet,
The captain he scented a burning smell,
And asked the orderly if all was well.

"Tis only the ink on the paper, sir,
That the heat of the bricks has started to stir,

For I heated the bricks with an awful heat
To take the chill from your poor, cold feet."

The satisfied captain closed his eye
And went to sleep with a peaceful sigh,
And he dreamed of the damsel so trim and neat,
The one he was with when he got cold feet.

Just what was the time the captain awoke
In his little brown tent that was filled with smoke
Will never be known, for he can't tell,
'Cause his mind was jumbled with visions of Hell.

The cotton mattress had caught afire,
And his coat had burned on the hot brick pyre,
His feet were blistered and awful hot,
And the canvas was burned on his army cot.

Two blankets were ruined in a manner neat,
But the cold was gone from the captain's feet,
And he swore and oath, did this captain bold,
That never again would his feet get cold.

Now cold in your feet is an awful thing,
And the army tent has a frosty sting,
While the chill, cold nights with a girl alone,
Will often chill your feet to the bone.

But never again will this captain bold
Use hot bricks when his feet are cold,
For never again will he have cold feet
When out with a damsel, trim and neat.

Now forget what I've written, re the captain's fix,
The cold in the feet and the heat in the bricks,
Let's all have a drink of a brand that is mellow,
For the captain's a prince and a darn good fellow.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 116–118.

Why He Enlisted

The Old Top's Reason

You ask me why I left me job, you want to know real bad,
Want to know why I'm a soldier? Well, I will tell ye lad.
Just squat yourself upon the cot and listen while I spiel,
And when I'm through I think you'll say my reason sure was real.

I'm forty years, come April month, forty years and gray,
And all my life I've had to work with little time for play.
For twenty years I've toiled and toiled, early hours and late,
Toiled for a mother old and gray and a crippled sister, Kate.

Kate, she died just six years back, a blessing sure was meant;
And mother's time soon followed Kate's, last year was when she went.
And I was left alone, my lad, to toil and work and slave,
With just one kin, a brother, lad, whose given name was Dave.

Now Dave, he was a wild one, just young and full of hell.
He'd work, get drunk, quit his job, then work another spell,
Good lookin', yes. Had taking ways with all the women kind;
Had everything a man could want, except he lacked a mind.

That is his mind was there, my lad, but it was warped and small,
His thinkin' powers were runted, his actions never tall.
But somehow little Nellie thought that Dave was all pure gold,
She married him, God bless her soul, for her I was too old.

Yet, lad, I loved that little girl with a love that was sublime,
But brother Dave he butted in and simply beat my time.
She was happy, lad, for 'bout a year, then Dave he went plumb wild,
He left her all alone, the skunk, her and her little child.

He vanished from his daily haunts, the halls of booze and dance
And nary a word for two long years, 'till a letter came from France.
We read that letter, her and me, 'twas from a friend of Dave;
He told of how my brother died and where to find his grave.

Killed by the Huns in action, fightin' with the Princess Pats,
When a bloomin' bit of screechin' shell caved in most all his slats.
Dave were no coward, that much I'll say, he just was full of hell;
He didn't mean to do no harm when he deserted Nell.

He simply lacked the brains, me lad, to give him common sense,
His mind was all befuddled, his thinkin' powers were dense.
The blood of him was runnin' wild, he liked to drink and dance,
But when they needed men to fight, he took the fighter's chance.

A year went by, I slaved and toiled and kept his child and wife,
And then I asked her one bright day if she would share my life.
She bowed her head and shed some tears and then she answered yes.
Was I happy? Can you ask? You know I was, I guess.

I'd loved her lad for five long years, five years of pain and grief;
Why, when she wedded brother Dave, I called the lad a thief,
But I was old and they were young, and youth will have its day.
I simply bowed my head to Fate and chased the tears away.

The day was set, the future bright for Nell, whom I adore,
When Wilson stopped his peaceful talk and said we were at war.
We had to fight to save our skins and lick the German Hun,
The country needed all its men to fight with sword and gun.

I went to Nell. We talked it o'er; she told me what to do.
That's why I'm here today, my lad, with all the rest of you.
Happiness, the girl I love, and all my peaceful creed
I left behind when country called and Uncle was in need.

She's going to wait for me, my lad, she promised that she would,
The love I have for her, my lad, I know she understood.
'Cause 'fore I left to come and join with all you other men
She kissed me once upon the lips and said, "God bless you,
Ben."

Over the Top we're going to go and give the Germans hell,
And when we do my thoughts will be back home with little Nell,
And just the thought will make me fight with all my might and main,
So I'll be able to get through and see my Nell again.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 119–121.

When We Make the Kaiser Run

It isn't the things we want to do here in the shining sun,
It isn't the things they make us do that cause the perpetual fun,
It isn't the drill or the morning hike, with full canteen and gun,
It's the thought of the Kaiser beating it quick when we get him on the run.

He'll sure be sick when he doubles it quick for his mouldy castle retreat,
And he'll make us smile when he runs a mile with a cramp in both his feet.
We'll follow him strong as he marches along, twenty-four hours a day,
And we'll keep him quiet, on a cold lead diet, and he won't have much to say.

We will cross his lines when we get the signs, and we'll sure set a pace that's hot,
We'll chase the old Kaiser and show him we're wiser than all of his big German lot.

'Neath the roar of the guns this king of the Huns will break all records for speed,
He'll set a grand pace, it will be a swift race but we'll get him with all of his breed.

He'll be so darn weak that he wont dare to speak, this scholar of murder and sin,
When we take his retreats and march on the streets of his cherished and wicked Berlin.
And it won't take very much to put him in touch with a thing that will keep his hands tied,
When he hears our feet tramp he will sure have a cramp and suffer a blow to his pride.

When the order once comes, no thought of drums will muster the acts of our feet,
We'll go over the top, and we never will stop 'till Bill, the cruel Kaiser, is beat.
When it's double quick march, full of pep and of starch, our footsteps never will lag,
We may stagger and stumble and holler and grumble, but we'll follow our glorious flag.

We will go in a trice and we'll think it is nice, a feeling you never will beat,
And we'll get the Hun's goats, and their submarine boats and also their big battle fleet.
Ice water'll be banned, and cold pop be canned, no candy or cookies with borders,

Ice cream they'll taboo and grape juice they'll shoo, all by the general orders.
Along with the French, we will take the last trench where the
Germans are standing at bay,
And the damned German Hun and their Kaiser will run when we enter the
battle that day.
So it isn't the drill or the morning hike, with full canteen and gun,
It's the thought of the Kaiser beating it quick when we get him on the run.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, pp. 122–123.

Our Boys Who've Gone Away

It's lonesome now in all the towns. Lads who just yesterday
Were care free boys, a singing and laughing at their play,
Boys who met each week-day night and laid the future plan
For all the things they planned to do when each became a man
Have vanished from their daily haunts, the base-ball field and dam.
They have gone to join the colors and fight for Uncle Sam.

They have gone to join the colors in the Guards, the Regs and Draft,
They volunteered for service when the slackers sneered and laughed.
They joined their different units, and smiled before they went
To join Uncle's soldiers who across the seas were sent
To the battle fields of Europe, on the plains of Sunny France,
Where they will fight for Uncle and take a soldier's chance.

It's lonesome now that they have gone, those youngsters full of fun,
Gone to fight for freedom and battle with the Hun,
It's lonesome as the dickens, since they have gone away.
These khaki covered fighting men were boys but yesterday,
And every soul in Uncle's land sends a message to them all,
God Bless the men of Uncle Sam who answered to the call.

Publication. First published in *American Soldier Ballads*. Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1917, p. 124.

RHYMES IN KHAKE

Complete poetry text • 1918

The distinct poems from the 1918 edition follow in source order. Physical line wraps have been rejoined; true stanza spaces, indentations, subtitles, internal headings, and authorial notes remain.

Foreword

The life of man I liken unto a book—each page representing the days he lives and on those pages, beginning with the day of his birth, are written those things which bring joy and happiness, sorrow and grief, and sunshine and rain into his life. Each page is written in a language that only he understands; it contains an indestructible record, of both joyful and sorrowful happenings that are known to him as the red letter days of his life.

It is from the red letter pages of my life that I have selected the material for this little book, feeling that I have touched upon the living pages in the life of every real man.

Love and hate, longing and yearning, ambition and desire, failure and success—all are a part of the life of every man. I believe that every incident touched upon in this book is but a reflection of thoughts and emotions that are common to all.

F. B. C.

Spring in the Northland

The Chinook wind was blowing through the gulches on the hills;
You could hear the tapping, rapping, of the early whip-poor-wills;
All the mountain streams torrential, through the forests madly whirled.
And Spring was chasing Winter, with her banners all unfurled.

The big blue grouse were booming, 'mongst the jack-pines on a log.
And the white-tail deer were wading in the steaming meadow bog;
You could hear the squirrels chatter and the blue-jays loudly scold.
For the air came warm and balmy when Old Winter lost its hold.

The chickadees were happy and the bear were on the hills
And the mountain trout were leaping from the riffles and the rills;
'Twas Springtime in the Northland, in the land of Big Out-Doors,
The Chinook wind was blowing on kind Nature's woodland floors.

The new bunch grass was growing where the cattle frisked and played.
While the wind among the tree tops, gently murmured as they swayed;
The sky was clear as crystal, and I offered up a prayer.
And thanked the Lord for living, on that Springtime morning rare.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, pp. 1–2.

To Jim, Who Died in France

Jim was a no-good son-of-a-gun, back in his own home town;
For years he'd hit the toboggan slide, always sliding down;
Shiftless he was and lacked the will to do anything worth while;
And all he had when the big war came, was the ghost of a human smile.

Drunk in the morning, drunk at night, drunk whenever he could.
All that was bad in Jim's make-up had smothered the spark of good;
Now I don't mean to say it had killed the spark,
so it never would burn again,
But just that the spark was awfully faint, like an ember soaked with the rain.

Yet like the ember soaked in the rain, the spark in his heart still burned.
And whenever the rain of evil ceased, the glow in the heart returned.
The booze was the evil spirit of Jim, and it had caused his fall.
Till the heart, the body, and brain of him had all grown weak and small.
Thus was Jim when war broke out and the day of the draft had come,
When the mighty legions of Uncle Sam were mustered to fife and drum.
When the nation had listed its fighting men,
from twentyto thirty-one.
To fight the war of Democracy, and rid the world of the Hun.

Jim, who was just past twenty-four, listed his age and name.
Not that he cared to soldier and fight or win undying fame;
But because he was sober for that one day, —
sober and able to think, —
So he took the pen with the other men and wrote down his name with ink.

"Jim H, American, twenty-four and a reckless son-of-a-gun."
Ready to go with a million more and battle with any Hun, —
Drunk or sober, ready to fight booze and the Kaiser too.
They called him a no-good son-of-a-gun, but the heart of the lad was true.

Sergeant Jim of the bombing squad, — six months in an army camp, —
That was the title tacked on him, when the orders came to tramp.
Jim with a thousand soldiers or more, of every listing and sort,
Sailed one day on a transport gray and arrived at a big French port.

From the port they marched to a battle trench,
supporting the ranks of the fighting French,
Raided the Boche one starry night, fought like the devil with all their might.

Jim, with a dozen or maybe more, was covered with glory — as well as with
gore —

When a dum-dum hit him straight on the head,
— just a dum-dum bullet, — and Jim was dead !

Jim was a no-good son-of-a-gim six months before he died, —
He'd ridden for years on the downward path of Fate's toboggan slide;
But he died like a man, in the fighting van, for the country that gave him birth.
And the battle he won, while fighting the Hun,
established his rating and worth.

The grave where he lies, 'neath the sunny French skies, is one of a million more.
On the cross, snowy white, were these words that I write, "Jim H, age
twenty-four.

Bombardier Company, U. S. A., killed in action,
second of May, fighting the German horde."

He sure was a man who fought in the van. After all I guess Jim scored !

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, pp. 3–5.

The Pipe Creek Trail

The old days, the old trail, to Pipe Creek leading.
The old hills and the deer in the meadows feeding.
Rumbling thunder in the hills, vivid lightning flashing,
I can see the old creek's rills and the water splashing.

Visions of the days of yore call me, always pleading;
Paddy dear, it's Pipe Creek's roar and you that I am needing.
To chase the blues and bring content and make of me a laddie.
Oh, the days I spent with you on Pipe Creek,
Paddy !

It's the old days, the old trail, that in my memory looms.
The Big Trees, the Shiny Fish, the House of Many Rooms,
The hikes we took together, 'mongst the pines and tamarack.
And Your gentle voice seems calling, "Billy,
won't you please come back."

The old days, the old trail, the Pipe Creek that I love.
Are calling to me, Paddy, as a dove calls to a dove.
I want the snow-capped mountains, the wild things and the woods.
The Big Out-Doors and freedom, the Springtime rain and floods.

I hate the towns and cities with their artificial glare.
And the shallow, two-faced people, who really do not care
For the real things, the big things, that God has put on earth, —
I detest their shallow pleasures; in their joy I find but dearth.

I have danced and dined with many, in the city's maelstrom strife.
Till I saw and then I sickened, with the aimless,
shallow life.

Then, Paddy girl, I left it, with its many, many ills,
And sought a life of freedom, in your land of trees and hills.

Years passed and I was happy, then our country needed men.
So I joined the U. S. Army, in this awful slaughter pen.
I've a million fighting brothers and I've been here most a year.
In this Hell of screeching shrapnel, with your memory, Paddy dear.
The shells and rockets breaking take me back across the seas
Where the thunderstorms are playing in the mountains 'mongst the trees,
And the raiding parties 'mind me of the deer we used to stalk,

On the hillsides in the evenings, when we hardly dared to talk.
And now the old Trail's calling, always louder every day.
And the land where you are living calls me back again to stay.
In the Big Out-Doors of Nature, where the sky is bright and blue.
To Pipe Creek and the cabin, to the mountains and to you !

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, pp. 6–8.

Memories That Never Die

Men from the North-West Country Remember

I was in the first line trenches.
Where the air is filled with stench, —
Grim stench of the battle-field and gas.
I could hear the shrapnel whine,
I could see the star flares shine,
And the crumpled forms of soldiers on the grass.

I could hear the whispered mumble
Of the Poilus, and the grumble
Of a dozen husky youngsters gripping guns.
As we waited for the order.
That would send us 'cross the border.
For another awful wallop at the Huns.

And while waiting I was dreaming
Of a land where life was teeming
With the Big Things, that are all of sterling worth, —
The Mountains, Trees, and Prairies,
The Wild Things, — yes — and Fairies, —
And the North West that is called the pride of Earth.

To that far and distant land, —
Oh, that they could understand ! —
I journeyed with my thoughts that awful day;
Again I knelt and drank.
From the shady, mossy bank.
Of a mountain stream that babbled on its way.

I climbed the mountains high.
To their snow tips near the sky,
And I gazed upon the valley far below.
Where I saw a winding river.
All a gleam and all aquiver,
With the brightest rays of sunshine, all aglow.

I heard the constant droning
Of the North wind always moaning,
As it played among the tall and monster trees.

And the faint but steady thrumming
Of a pheasant that was drumming
Was wafted to my ears upon the breeze.

I heard a wolf a-wailing.
And I saw an eagle sailing
Far above me in the clear and azure sky;
Then I heard a crash like thunder,
And I knew that I was under
A big shell that exploded passing by.

Passing by, passing by.
They were always passing by,
They were tearing up the earth.
They were lighting up the sky.
They had wiped the North West vision
From my strained and tearful eye.

*Men from the North West country of the United States and Canada are fighting
in France for that freedom which their lives spent in God's Big Out-Doors has
taught them to be the most wonderful thing in the world.*

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, pp. 9–10.

Doing My Bit

They turned me down for service 'cause my leg was on the bum.
They put me in this office where the tickers buzz and hum.
They took me from the open and caged me in this pen.
To do my bit for War time with a thousand other men.

But I've heard the summer thunder in my ears the livelong day;
I have seen the lightning flashing on the hills across the way;
I have heard the bull moose calling and the booming of the grouse.
And I've sat before the fireplace, in my little old log house.

I've been hunting on the ridges, where the huckleberries grow
And the mountain sheep are playing in the everlasting snow;

Where the big black bear is feasting on the luscious mountain fruit.
And the shadows of deep purple fill the canyons near the butte.

I've been fishing in the rivers where the mountain trout abide;
I've been swimming in its waters that flow to meet the tide;
I have trapped the mink, the martin, the beaver;
and the rest.
And have seen again the sunsets on old Mother.
Nature's breast.

The fool hen and the pheasant I have jumped along the trail,
I have heard the South wind sighing and the North wind loudly wail;
I've thrown the diamond hitches, with the pack straps pulling tight.
And I've paddled weary journeys in my birch canoe at night.

I have cruised among the timber with never trail or track;
I have carried sixty pounds of grub upon my aching back;
I've climbed the steepest mountain peaks, ten thousand feet or more;
I've slept at night among the trees on Mother Nature's floor.

I've trailed the pesky white-tail, the elk, and caribou;
I've shot a hundred wolves or more and drilled them through and through;
I've skied and snow-shoed many miles, I've walked the crust and then
Had such a feast of mulligan, thought I'd never eat again.

I've swung the double-bitted axe, I've made the cross-cut sing.
And with the Springtime drive of logs I've also had my fling;
I've fought the raging forest fire with fifty other men.

But now I'm fighting Germans — with a pencil and a pen;
And while fighting, have these visions that I always love the best, —
Of God's Big Land and Mountains, in the distant old North West.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, pp. 11–13.

The Gold Service Star and the Sister

SISTER

Never star in heaven high
Shone so brightly to my eye.
As the star I saw to-day,
In the window 'cross the way.
All the lustre it contained
From the field of battle drained.
All the brightness of a soul.
On the nation's honor roll.
Bade my footsteps cease to lag.
When I saw that Service Flag,
With its Star of Shining Gold,
And knew the story that it told.
Of a youth who gave his all,
When he answered to the Call.

I was in that West Front Hell
Midst the bursting, shrieking shell,
Where the star lights brightly flare.
Where the rockets burst in air;
Where machine guns shoot till hot,
'Gainst the " Huns " of " Me und Gott.
I could hear the shrapnel hop,
I could see him cross The Top,
I could see him as he died.
His face alight with love and pride.
For mother, sister, country, all, —
For the Great Cause saw him fall, —
Fighting 'gainst a thing of Hate
To decide his country's fate.

From the Star my eyes then strayed
'Till they rested on the maid, —
The sister of the man who died, —
She was smiling, but sad eyed;
In those eyes I saw a light
Of joyful pride that shone so bright

It made them twinkle from afar.
And shine as brightly as the Star,
A grief for him who bravely died
Was mingled with that joyful pride.
And the thought of all he gave
Had changed the laughing eyes to grave;
True womanhood, — with eyes alight, —
Like yon Star that shines so bright !

My sister, when the Great Cause has been won,
Then you can say "'twas hard to have him go/"
His grave is made beneath an alien sun.
With honor marked, where tender breezes blow.
But now, — no time for tears, — just deeds
Of glorious sacrifice for you and yours.
You will be brave for your dear mother's needs,
Dry eyed, you hear the call, your strength endures.
You've had your years together, — they are past,
And memories dear lie close witlin your heart.
And while you cherish them until the last.
Remember that you too must do your part.
And when the war is won and men are free.
Then your dear eyes, that burned with hidden fires.
May shed their tears, and you will plainly see
The peace and truth, not dreams, of your desires.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, pp. 14–16.

When Wilt Thou?

O tiny attic room wherein
My daily life is spent,
When wilt thou cease to close me in
And leave the sky my tent ?

O little table where I write
My songs when work is done.
When wilt thou turn to greenest sod
Beneath the shining sun ?

O little bed wherein I sleep
And dream outside the bars.
When wilt thou change to Mother Earth
Beneath the lonely stars ?

O little life of narrow things,
Lived on a narrow strand.
When wilt thou let my freed soul roam
In God's big Out-Door Land.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, p. 17.

Alone, Forgotten, and Broke

Alone, forgotten, broke, and it's raining.
Ye gods ! can you ask why I'm complaining ?
To be all alone in this big, old world
Is enough, with the banners of Hope all furled.
To be also forgotten, deserted, and broke
Brings home to your mind a tragical joke
But add to them all the clouds and the rain,
'Tis then that you feel the keen, stabbing pain, —
The pain of a soul when all hope is lost, —
The thought of a life to nothingness tossed.
Alone with your thoughts of the dead, buried past,
Forgotten by Her, whom you loved till the last.
With courage far spent, — and he's broke in the rain, —
A man is a man who can take heart again.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, p. 18.

The Bark of a Dog

This chapter of life that I relate
Was written the winter of Ninety-eight;
Scrawled in the frozen nights and days,
Where the Northern lights glitter and blaze;
Where the ice and snow have spread a pall
Over the land and covered it all;
Where the body of man will freeze and rot.
But the soul of a man is never forgot.

I was alone on the narrow trail.
And the wind was blowing a fearful gale.
The air was filled with a blinding snow
That chilled the blood 'till it ceased to flow;
The day was fleeting, the light was dim, —
For the winter sun was below the rim
Of the mountains high with their covers of white.
God, how I dreaded the thought of night !

Dreaded the thought of the inky black
That would wipe out the trail and the snow-shoe track,
For I sensed the battle I'd have to fight,
To keep from dying that long, cold night.
You people who live in your world apart,
With home and friends to warm your heart.
Warm and secure from the biting frost.
Can't understand what it means to be lost

In the wintry wastes of God's Big Land,
With freezing feet and frozen hand,
When the legs on your body slowly tire,
And you've nary a match to kindle a fire,
When the night is chasing the fleeting day.
And the light on the trail grows dim and gray.
While the thoughts of your past and your wasted life
Pierce through your soul, like the stab of a knife.

But supposing you can't quite understand
How it feels to be lost in the Northern land.
There's surely a few who will read these lines

Who've heard the wind as it wails through the pines.
Who know God's mountains, his trees, and his streams.
And the "Call of the Wild," that's as real as it seems.
The few, while reading, will know, forsooth.
That the things that I write are only the truth.

Back to that night then let us return.
The memory of which will always burn.
I can yet feel the snow on my freezing face.
As I blindly sought for the faintest trace
Of a blaze on a tree that would point the way
To that cabin of mine 'fore the close of day;
But the blaze wasn't there, on fir tree or pine.
Except where the snow had hidden the sign.

Afraid ? Well I guess; I was choked with fear,
'Cause I knew very well that death was near,
And I was not ready to cash in my checks.
For my life was sinful and covered with "specks";
So I fought for my life and I cursed my fate.
On that cold winter night in Ninety-eight.
When just as the light gave way to the dark,
I heard on the wind my dog's deep bark.

I stopped so sudden I almost fell.
And from my throat there issued a yell;
That carried above the North wind's blast,
Till it reached Old King, who was chained up fast;
The instant he heard it he started to bark.
While I followed the sound through the snow and the dark,
'Till I reached the cabin and patted his head.
There is no use telling the things I said.

But when I had kindled a roaring fire.
And the coffee had boiled on the flaming pyre,
I called Old King and patted his head.
I'm not ashamed of the tears I shed.

'Twas his love for me that postponed my fate.
On that night I was lost in Ninety-eight.
And there's no sound since, in daylight or dark.
That ever will sound like that faithful bark.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, pp. 19–21.

The Springtime Rain

Hear the rain, hear the rain.
As it beats upon the pane.
As it patters on the eaves.
And rippling, slowly weaves
A joyous, rhythmic song
In the hours that move along.

See the rain, see the rain.
As it trickles from the pane,
As it wets the sloping roof,
And mingles with the woof
Of the years, with their tears.
And their never ending fears.

Springtime rain, Springtime rain.
Brings to memory again
The church bells loudly ringing.
The mocking birds a-singing, —
Turning back the flight of time.
To those happy days sublime.

Oh the rain, oh, the rain, —
That I hear and see again, —
May the song you always sing
To my mind forever bring
A vision always clear,

Of the things I loved so dear
May the feeling that is vain
Never cause me grief or pain.
When I hear the tiny patter.
Of the Springtime rain.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, pp. 22–23.

A Vision of the Past

I stood on the peak of the summit
That divided the woodland trail
As the sun rose over the mountain
And brightened the shadows pale.

I gazed on the scene below me, —
The river a mile below.
Winding away through the forest, —
And I found that my thoughts would flow

To a land that was long forgotten,
A place in a city of sighs.
Where life — a mirage — is seen vaguely.
Where people are living lies.

Once more I walked with the many, —
The men of a two-faced breed, —
With their fickle aims and their striving
All bound in a shallow creed.

The vision then paled and soon faded.
But never a longing remained
For the things or the men as I knew them
Nor the bright, false glamour contained.

I heard the grouse in the woodland,
I saw the brown flash of a deer.
And thanked my God for the Open,
Where life could be simple and clear.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, p. 24.

Old Dave

He was old in years, but his spirit was young;
Eighty long winters their marks had hung
When I first heard Dave, in his Scottish tongue.
Give voice to the song that he always sung.

"Hoot Mon," says he, "I'm beginnin' to think
That I'm gettin' too old for my daily drink;
So just write this down with a lasting ink,
'Fore I take the trip 'cross the final brink."

He'd a tongue that could cut like a skinnin' knife.
When he talked of the city's whirl and strife.
Of the woman he'd married and made his wife.
The one who had caused him to choose this life.

He told me his story one cold winter night,
When the moon shone clear with a frosty light
And the sparkling snow was a beautiful sight,
Seen through the window so clear and bright.

The things that he told were seared on my mind,
For never before had I heard of their kind;
They chilled me through like the cold North wind.
The scenes from his life that he'd left behind.

"Youngster," he says with his Scottish leer,
"You'll no doubt think that I'm daft and queer.
When I speak of the things that I once held dear,
'Twas, — let me think, — why, it's fifty year !

"Fifty years since the Hand of Fate
Weaved its threads o'er the things I hate.
Just fifty years since I wiped from my slate
The story, lad, of a girl named Kate.

" I met the lass on a summer's day,
When heather and roses bordered the way
That led to the shore of the distant bay.
Where the poundin' waves filled the air with spray.

" Katie MacNair was the lassie's name.
Her father, lad, was a man of fame.
Her mother a blue-blooded Scottish dame,
And she'd been well raised in her Scottish hame.

" I wooed her, lad, with a love that burned.
And I wedded her, lad, before I learned
That my love for her she had blighted and spurned
For a no-good chap, to whom she had turned.

"When I learned she was false, I left her there, —
Cursing her face with its beauty rare, —
Damning her, lad, that she did not care,
Damning the one they called Katie O'Claire.

" So for fifty years I have led this life.
Here where the North wind cuts like a knife
And sings through the trees, like the notes from a fife.
Far from the city's turmoil and strife.

" I'm tellin' you, lad, what happened to me
When I was young and happy and free,
Tellin' you so you can plainly see
How false a heart can really be."

Thus spoke Old Dave on that wintry night.
When the moon shone clear with a frosty light
And the blanket of snow was a dazzling white,
In the Big North Land where the world is bright.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, pp. 29–31.

The Grave of Caribou Joe

In the western wilds of Montana,
On a wooded mountain side.
Where the Kootenai's flowing waters
Never cease their rapid glide.
Where the giant pine and tamarack
In the mountain breezes wave,
'Neath a mound with bunch-grass overgrown
Lies Caribou Joe's lone grave.

Not marked with a marble column,
No granite head or stone
Proclaims the mighty hunter
Who rests therein alone.
No flowers placed by any hand.
No mourners there to show.
No mark except a wooden slab
Upraised from glistening snow.

The Bob Tail road a-winding.
Where the wild deer often tread,
Leads to the slope of the mountain,
To the grave where rests the dead.
And the big red sun, when setting.
Casts a glow on ledge and cave.
And leaves a ray of sunshine,
On Caribou Joe's lone grave.

Forgotten is he by the many,
Remembered, alas ! by the few;
He rests on that rugged mountain
'Neath western skies of blue.
The pine squirrels scold and chatter.
And the pheasant drums all day,
While the woodrats in his cabin
Seek the empty rooms in play.

The span of his years were many.
Up there on the mountain high;
With God's real things he companioned

And hunted beneath the sky.
The caribou wild and lordly
He hunted and trapped for game.
No fear he knew, and his daring
Won him at last his name.

Through years that were long and lonely
He roamed the forest wild.
From none he sought gift or favor,
Till the hour before he died;
Then he told old Tony Stiver
That he'd be contented to go
If he knew he could rest on the mountain,
With the Kootenai waters below.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, pp. 32–33.

The Dead Packhorse

He died one day on the Pipe Creek trail,
Where the North wind blew, with a snarl and wail,
Through the towering pines and the big fir trees
That crack like guns as they slowly freeze.

The trail was choked with a heavy snow.
And the mercury dropped to forty below;
We'd packed the critter, twenty miles from town,
With a heavy load, when he just lay down.

Collapsed, by gum, with nary a groan.
And froze in his tracks as hard as stone.
Two hundred pounds of grub in the pack.
And forty-two miles to the little log shack.

Says I to Gabriel, "There's nothin' to do
But cut the pack just plumb in two,
A half for me and the same for you;
Some load, old man, but we gotta go through.

" 'Cause the woman and kiddies have got to eat,
And nothin' they've got but jerked deer meat;
For the thieves that busted their cabin door
Took all their grub that they had in store."

"Hell's Hounds, them," says Gabriel to me.
"I'm hopin' they freeze on a broken ski,
Stealin' the grub from woman and child.
That's left alone in this Land o' the Wild."

Homesteadin' folks was what they were.
And a no-good hound was the husband of her;
He worked in the city at sellin' goods.
While she and the kiddies were left in the woods.

We furnished 'em meat, both Gabe and me;
Cut 'em their wood from the tamarack tree.
Dandled the kiddies upon our knees.
And mudded the cabin so they wouldn't freeze.

It had been just a week since we'd been to the shack.
And the falling snow had covered each track;
But it made no difference to Gabe and me.
For the blaze on the trees we could plainly see.

At last we arrived, 'twas half past three.
And we learned of their plight and their misery;
For hours they heard but the storm's cold beat;
Not a bite in the cabin for them to eat.

'Twas sixty-two miles to the nearest place,
Where they peddled grub, but we set the pace.
Took the old pack horse and hit the trail.
Where the snow piles high and the North winds wail.

Two days later we had the snitch
Packed on the critter with diamond hitch.
And was buckin' the snow with a feelin' of pride.
When the packhorse quit and lay down and died.

Now two hundred pounds on a horse's back
Is just about right for a two days' pack;
But a hundred pounds on a poor man's back
Make the shoes go deep in the snow-shoe track.

And forty-two miles is sure some jaunt,
When you're thinkin' of them that's starvin' and gaunt.
But Gabe and I made it, as sure as you live,
With all the comforts we had to give.

Ain't no use describin' that hike, my friends, —
The covered white trail with its endless bends,
The broken thongs on the big snow-shoes.
Or the tiresome hours when we had the blues.

It had to be done to save them three.
And there was none to do it but Gabe and me;
'Twas simply the work that a man would do.
If he had a soul and his mind was true.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, pp. 34–36.

Ages and Ages Ago

To Marie C——

You were a Maid and I was a Lad,
Ages and Ages ago.
You grew to a Woman and I to a Cad,
Ages and Ages ago.
You're still a Woman and I'm still a Cad,
You are quite happy and I am sad.
You were sorry and I was glad.
Ages and Ages ago.
You have forgotten, but I never will;
The memory of you will haunt me still.
For I always have lacked the spirit and will
That enables a man a ghost to kill.
Of Ages and Ages ago.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, p. 37.

To Amy

Another year is dying.
As I write these lines.
And my thoughts are trav'ling northward
To the land of hills and pines;
To a place of snow-capped mountains,
Where the furred things roam at will.
Where the air with frost is laden,
And the trails are white and still.
Where I can see your features
On the piled-up drifts of snow.
Where the wind wails through the canyon.
When it's forty-five below.

Another year is dying,
'Twill be dead in just an hour,
And I'm praying while I'm writing
For the gods to give me power.
The power to make my memory.
Cease to cause me grief and pain.
The power to put some sunshine
In my clouded life again.
The power to conquer longing
For you, for whom I'm sighing.
As the time is swiftly fleeting.
And another year is dying.
All I ask the gods to give me
Is forgetfulness, or you,
While the year is slowly dying.
And I wait in hope for you.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, p. 38.

The Shadow

My childhood days and days of youth with sunshine all were dressed,
The years I lived in early life with brightness all were blessed;
My eyes saw only things that were, so pure and clean and bright,
I lived through days of happiness and dreamed in peace at night.

But now a shadow has been cast, that covers all with gloom.
The world that once was bright for me is now a living tomb;
Things are topsy-turvy in this big old world to-day.
The shadow covers all the world in weird and threatening way.

It's the Shadow cast by child slaves, whose souls are ground to dust.
As their young and growing bodies are used to feed some Trust.
It's the Shadow of the young girl, who gives her all for bread,
Her body, soul, and womanhood, of all life's joys are bled.

It's the Shadow cast by workers, who toil and toil and toil.
Like mere machines in factories, that wreck and stunt and soil;
It's the Shadow cast by years of war, the millions they are killing.
The world gone mad, the rivers red with all the blood that's spilling.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, pp. 39–40.

To Paddy W——

A Memory

Paddy, are you really human.
Or a ghost that I once met ?
Are you living in this old world.
In a place I'll ne'er forget ?
Can it be that you're existing.
On this drear old world with me.
Somewhere in the Northland
That is dear to memory?
The years have passed so swiftly.
Since the night we said good-bye.
And I know that it is useless.
When for you I long and sigh.
Yet I see you always plainly.
As I knew you long ago.
In the land of trees and mountains.
With their gleaming peaks of snow.
And always will I see you.
As the years go flitting by.
And always will your picture.
Cause a disappointed sigh.
For I loved you, little Paddy,
With a love that was sincere.
But now you've gone forever.
Like the past days of a year.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, p. 41.

To Mildred's Eyes

You, Mildred girl, with the dark eyes that shine
Upon me at times with a look that's divine.
They cause me to feel that you would be mine
If I were to ask you.

You, Mildred girl, with the dark eyes that gleam
With some fantastic, old world dream
And make me fear you are not what you seem.
They make me hesitate to ask you.

You, Mildred girl, with the dark eyes that mock
And make you look in your dainty frock, —
So young and timid and easy to shock,
Would they melt if I were to ask you ?

You, Mildred girl, with the dark eyes that tease, —
The eyes that make me do as you please, —
The eyes that I worship on bended knees, —
Would they laugh if I were to ask you ?

Would they mock ? Would they tease ?
Would they gleam ? Would they shine ?
Or would they consent to be really mine ?
Some day, Mildred dear, I may ask you.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, p. 42.

Boy O'Mine

Boy O'mine, if you but knew how crushed I really feel.
How each and ev'ry word you wrote, forced me to go and kneel, —
To pray to God that what you said, was but a jest from you.
For ev'ry word and line I read, my soul pierced through and through.

Boy O'mine, if you could feel as I felt on that night.
When first I read the words, so real, that filled my soul with fright.
You never more would write in jest, to one who loves you true;
Of all the boys I've loved you best, I'd die, need be, for you.

Boy O'mine, if I but thought my love for you was vain.
That freedom from my love you sought, I could not stand the pain.
Some cord within I know would snap and tears would fill my eye.
For nothing e'er could fill the void, no matter how I'd try.
Boy O'mine, please write once more, a letter before you go.

Write as you did in days of yore; it's the truth I long to know.
If what you wrote the other day is true I'll bow my head.
And ask that you for me will pray, because, —
you'll know I'm dead !

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, pp. 43–44.

Conflicting Calls

The call of Love and the call of the Wild,
Are calling me now to-day.
Love for the girl I knew when a child.
And the Wild where I long to play.
O, the call of the Wild,
Always urging me on.
With its visions of mountains and trees.
In the Big Out-Doors of God's real land.
Where men can do as they please !
And how can I go to the Big Out-Doors,
And leave Her whom I love behind ?
Would not the longing be always there.
Destroying my peace of mind.'
These are the questions I'm asking to-day, —
Turning them in and out,
While both of the Calls ring through my heart
And fill all my mind with doubt
I listen to love, but I want to be free;
(If She only could understand !)
It might be she would go with me.
To the woods of the Big Northland.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, p. 45.

Flickering Shadows on the Wall

I watched the shadows on the wall.
Flickering shadows, rise and fall.
Shadows large and shadows small.

Shadows cast by burning fire.
That never seemed to really tire.
Fleeting shadows of desire.

My eyes were filled with unshed tears,
And visions of my wasted years.
With all their hopes and all their fears.

But as I watched the smouldering pile.
Burning past of things worth while,
Across my face there came a smile.

It was the thought of you, — a child.
And your manner meek and mild,
Taming me when I was wild.

All the shadows disappeared.
All the gloomy thoughts were cleared,
And the worth while things endeared.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, p. 46.

A Dream

To-day, while working in my chair,
I smelled the balmy, Spring-time air.
And being weary, there o'er me crept
A drowsy feeling and I slept.
And while sleeping came a dream;
I could hear a babbling stream;
I could see the water flashing;
And the big trout leaping, splashing;
I could hear the north wind wail;
I could see the flag of tail.
As the wild deer swiftly ran;
I could hear the Pipes of Pan;
I could see the monster trees.
Swaying in the gentle breeze.
I could hear the squirrels chatter
And the flickers' noisy clatter.
I could hear the pheasant drumming
And the wild bee, loudly humming;
I could smell the woodland flowers
Growing in their mossy bowers;
I could see the winding trail
Leading over ridge and dale.
I fished in riffle and in rills.
And climbed once more the wooded hills;
I could hear the wolf's weird wail.
And watch the white clouds swiftly sail.
I could smell the balsam boughs,
And hear the lowing of the cows;
I could hear a panther scream.
That awoke me from my dream.
Woke, — there in office chair.
To a life of work and care,

Where the money-maddened throng
Seldom hear the Out-Door Song.
Where they do not feel nor see
Things as they appear to me.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, pp. 47–48.

What Is—Is

You can read every day of the men.
Who have climbed by their faith in Self,
Until they have finally reached
A place on the uppermost shelf.
You can read every day of the men.
In every clime and land.
The ones who have failed and lost.
Who lay the blame in Fate's hand.
Can the man who has climbed to the highest,
On the Mountains of Honor in life,
Understand the miserable failure
Of the one in the Valley of Strife ?
Can the one who has struggled, then faltered.
The one who has lost every hope.
Understand the one who's succeeded
In climbing Life's steepest slope ?



There are men who are famous musicians,
There are men who know how to think,
Still others are wonderful artists.
With pencil, crayon or ink.
But no matter the name nor the talent.
That happens a man to adorn,
You can rest assured and it's certain.
It's a gift with which he was born.
No matter what brand of Failure,
Be it finance or law or just sport.
If the man is born a Failure,
He will live the life of his sort.

It is the Law of the Universe, truly, —
Regardless of sayings and creed, —
That some of us must be the failures.
While some are sure to succeed.

To Grace B——

You, Grace, with the bright blue eyes,
Clear blue eyes of wondrous size,
Eyes that shine with the purest light.
Reflecting a soul of lily white,
You with the ever present smile.
You who believe in things worth while.
You who are very young in years.
You who have never shed the tears.
That come to the eyes of womankind.
When love in their hearts some day they find;
Yours and mine is a friendship real,
A feeling rare we are proud to feel.
And always, Grace, when I think of you,
I'm asking God's help in all I do.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, p. 51.

The North West's Voice

I heard the Voice of the Big North West, in the Voice was a message clear.
And the steaming fogs on the hillsides, parted as it drew near.
It spoke of the trails now hidden, it whispered of mountains high.
Of river sands, where men with their hands, pan for gold until they die.
It chanted of big pine forests, where the whitetail lived and the bear.
Where the blue grouse bred, on the high hill's head, where the coyote has his
lair.
It breathed of the bright aurora, that shone with a million lights.
As it brightened the snow, where the North winds blow, chill on the winter
nights.
It crooned of the babbling mountain streams,
the riffles where big trout play.
Of their wonderous size, as they jump for flies,
in the cool of the summer day.
It hummed its praise, of the wonderful days,
in the land of the mid-night sun,
Of the gorgeous flowers, in their woodland bowers,
and the webs that the spiders spun,
O, it sung of the gold and silver, the copper and precious stones.
Of the caribou and the Red Man too, the tamarack needles and cones.
Of wood-peckers pounding the hollow trees,
the shriek of the eagle bold,
The black-tail deer and the big grey wolf, that hunts when the nights are cold.
Of a wonderful strand, in a glacier land, of gleaming mountains of snow.
Of the wintry gales, that fill all the trails, when it's forty or fifty below.
Of birch canoe and the rapids too, of rivers that swiftly glide.
Singing their song, as they rush along, to join the ocean tide.
O, the voice grows louder and louder as it falls on my listening ears.
It is filled with a joyous sadness, 'tis moistened with women's tears;
Once more I am craving to wander, once more I am longing to roam.

On the North West track, with snow shoe and pack, the voice is calling me home.

'Tis the voice that has called me onward, the voice of forest and hill.

And it always will call, 'til I end it all, for the voice has a conquering will.

To those who have lived in the Big North West among the Big Trees and the Big Mountains, the Voice of that country has been heard and always has the Voice sung and spoken of wonderful things that bring contentment to the Heart of Man.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, pp. 52–53.

To the Allied Soldiers 'Over There'

They are holding the lines on the bloody West,
Fighting the Germans, breast to breast,
'Gainst the naked steel and the bursting shell.
They are holding the line on the crater of Hell,
The line they are holding is red with blood,
The battle-scarred line is a crimson flood.
Men are dying to stem the tide
Of the Cultured legions, the Kaiser's pride.
The plains of Picardy with blood are red.
And the field of battle is covered with dead.
They are holding the lines 'gainst the German horde.
Keeping them back with the naked sword.
On the blood-soaked fields, where the shrapnel whines,
The men of the allies are holding the lines.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, p. 54.

Dedicated to Quentin Roosevelt

Youngest Son of Ex-President Theodore Roosevelt—Who Gave His Life for the
'Great Cause'

"Youngest son of an illustrious father,
You who gave your life
For the 'Great Cause,'
You who died far above the earth
While guiding your winged chariot
Against the enemy of the world.
Your name will always live
In the country that gave you birth.
Your memory will always be cherished
By the free peoples of the world.
Your comrades in arms will tell of how you died
To their sons and to their grandsons.
How you went forth to engage the enemy,
How you met and fought them.
How you were killed in action.
They will speak of your youth.
Of how the blood of your father
And the spirit of freedom.
The pluck, endurance, and pure American grit
Made you a real American,
Showed you the path you were to tread
And enabled you to do
All that a man can do
For his country, for the freedom
And the Democracy of the World.
'Killed in Action, Quentin Roosevelt,
Age twenty years — a real American.'
Always will these words bring a thrill
To those who read them during the years to come.
And the Gold Star on the Service flag
Will never lose its lustre
As long as the world endures."

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, pp. 55–56.

The Roads of the World

The roads of the world are Varied Roads
And some of us tread them all —
The Long Roads and the Short Roads,
Wherever we heed the call.

Some of the Roads are Smooth Roads,
Broad and level and straight.
Perfect as Man can make them.
Aided by God and Fate,

Some of the Roads are Sad Roads,
Paved with sorrow and fear.
Filled with the ghosts of blasted hopes.
And sprinkled with many a tear.

Some of the Roads are Gay Roads,
Filled with laughter and song.
Paved with the smiles of the Happy,
And the joy of the carefree throng.

Some of the Roads are Long Roads,
Crossing the Desert of Life,
Filled with the bleached and scattered bones
Of those who have died in the strife.

Some of the Roads are Short Roads,
Shaded by wonderful trees
Where Man may rest himself betimes
And spend glad hours at ease.

Some of the Roads are Evil Roads,
Ending where they begin,
Paved with blocks of Hypocrisy,
Shaded by trees of sin.

Some of the Roads are Good Roads,
Built by a Master Hand,
Winding away for miles and miles
Till they reach the Promised Land.

All of the Roads are Branch Roads,
Leading away from the Main.
We may tread them all before we die
But we all must come back again —

Back to the Big and Royal Road
'Fore ever we come to die,
For this is the Road of Life and Death
Of the How and the When and the Why.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, pp. 57–58.

A Talk with My Better Self

Last night I talked to my Better Self,
As I sat in my soft arm chair.
Watching the flames in the big fireplace
Flicker and smoulder and flare.
Says I to myself, my Better Self,
Why is it you're runt and small
When you really should be as big as I
Who am healthy and six feet tall ?
Why is it you're so crippled and dried
When you should be as rugged as I,
Does the body and mind — the conscious kind
Entreat you to wither and die ?
You say I have starved you and treated you bad
While stacking the cards in the pack,
That I've kicked you and cuffed you most of the time.
And stabbed you at times in the back.
You say you have pleaded and begged for a chance
When I blustered and bluffed and lied.
That when I chose "wine, women and song"
I said that I hoped you soon died.
You say that my treatment of you has been harsh.
That I've quit you for days and for years.
That the things I have done and the things I have said
Have filled you with sorrow and fears.
You say that you know you could grow to my size,
And wear the same clothes that I wear.
If I only would treat you as if you were real
And show that I truly did care.
Says I to myself, my Better Self,
Last night as I sat by the fire,
I'm believing forsooth that you do speak the truth.
So I'm going to grant your desire.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, pp. 59–60.

Can You Blame a Man for Doubting?

Can you blame a man for doubting
There's a God above the Sky,
When his planted crops are frozen,
And he sees his cattle die ?

Can you blame a man for doubting
There's a watching God above,
When death stalks through his household,
Killing faith and hope and love ?

Can you blame a man for doubting
There's a God who really cares.
When Fate with all her venom
Blocks everything he dares ?

Can you blame a man for doubting
There's a God who guides his feet.
When his wife and babes are starving.
And he's nothing more to eat ?

Can you blame a man for doubting
There is any God at all.
When all his plans and cherished hopes
In ruins about him fall ?

Can you blame a man for doubting
There is any God but Thor,
When all the nations in the world
Are waging bloody war ?

Can you blame a man for doubting
There's a God who calls the roll
And calling finds the doubter
And damns his very soul ?

You can blame a man for doubting
There's a God, I will admit;
But you can't blame him for doubting
That He cares one little bit

For the Humans on His big world.
More than any other kind.
If you blame a man for doubting.
Why you must be very blind.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, pp. 61–62.

I Must

Now that I have gone away from you.
My dear, my dear,
I must not think or grieve for you.
My orders must be clear.

When I am in those warring lands
I must do my part.
The work will fill my head and hands.
But not my heart.

I must be strong when I am there,
I must be brave.
No thought of you to bring me care For what I gave.

Yet through months of days and nights.
Where'er I go.
My eyes must be blinded by unfamiliar sights.
Thank God you will not know.

I must appear content where men can see,
Laugh where they can hear.
They must not know the sorrow that consumes me.
My dear, my dear.

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, p. 63.

The East Wind's Voice

To-day I rested neath an oak
And listened to the wind that spoke.
And as I listened words quite clear
Were by the wind spake in my ear.
"I am the East wind blowing free,
I've traveled miles across the sea,
I've come from where men take a chance
Upon the fields of Sunny France.
The mighty shell that whines and sings
I've carried far upon my wings;
The singing whining shrapnel shells
That carry pain and death
Have hurtled through my strongest gusts With deadly-fatal breath.
The star flares and the colored lights,
I've tossed and hurled about
Until they dimmed and flickered.
Then sputtered and went out.
Across the bloody battle fields
I've blown day and night
Upon a million struggling men
Who fought with all their might.
I've fanned the hot and fevered face
Of many a wounded man
Whose blood was dried and caked
Upon his face of tan.
I've shaken tents where surgeons toiled
With Red Cross nurses brave
Who worked beneath the shot and shell
A soldier's life to save.
O'er No Man's Land I've shrieked and roared "
And whipped the falling rain
Upon the wounded as they lay
Moaning aloud with pain. '
Across the Channel o'er the sea
I've journeyed day and night:
To call the men of Uncle Sam
To bid them go and fight. i

To you who rest beneath this tree
Far from the pain of It,
I bring a message — a command —,
Arise and do your bit."

Publication. First published in *Rhymes in Khaki*. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918, pp. 64–65.

ALASKA NUGGETS

Complete poetry text • 1921

The distinct poems from the 1921 edition follow in source order. Physical line wraps have been rejoined; true stanza spaces, indentations, subtitles, internal headings, and authorial notes remain.

To Alaska

The Home of the "Sour-dough" —
Both Woman and Man.
The Land of the "Sticker" —
Who marched in the Van.

A vast, wealthy Empire,
That's scarcely been scratched
By the pioneer "Mushers"
Who Won, Lost and Matched

The best years of their lives,
'Gainst the Hardship and Loss,
On cold, snowy Dog-trails,
On Swamps, Tundra and Moss.

To Alaska The Magnet,
That drew ev'ry Creed,
Then sorted the "Weakling",,
From those of the "Breed"

And left in the North-land,
A class without fear;
The Virile, Self-Confident
Much lovèd Pioneer.

The Men and the Women,
Who have blazed ev'ry trail,
From Dyea to Dawson
With Dog-team and Sail.

Who have joined the Stampede,
Followed blind Hunch and Whim,
To Nome and the Yukon
And the far Kuskokwim.

To Alaska, The Store-house
Of Treasures untold;
Coal Fields and Copper,
Crude Oil and Gold.

Salmon and Halibut,
Herring and Cod,
Fur farms and Canneries,
Mountains of God.

Land of the Big Things,
Home of the Great;
The Last Big Frontier,
The Forty-ninth State.

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, unnumbered preliminary pages.

Somehow You Get It

A Tribute from the Pioneer Musers and Old Sour-doughs

Man, when we read the Things you write,
The Things that you never did;
Our old blood flows, and our old eyes light.
With the vision of Things long hid.

"You never were there on the Dawson Trail,
You never were one of the Bunch;
But somehow you've sensed the damned travail,
And somehow you get the Hunch.

"You write of the Things we used to do.
You vision them all quite real,
The pictures you draw are vivid and true,
Those days you can sure reveal.

"You never took part in the damned stampede.
You never saw strong men weep;
But the Things that you write portray the Creed,
You've dug from the soil that's deep.

"You've garnered the Souls of the Pioneer,
You've winnowed them all and thrashed.
You've put into words, both sound and clear,
The Things that we've done and Cached.

"You've picked from the Sheaf the strongest Straws,
You've woven them into rhymes.
Some of the rhymes are full of flaws,
But they picture the Men and Times.

"And We who have done the Things you write.
Concerning the Days now past;
Feel as we read, you are one of the Breed,
That will Always and Ever last."

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, unnumbered preliminary pages.

Give Me Again

God, free me
From conventions that bind;
Release me from a narrow life
Both body and mind.

Give me Your mountains,
Your big forest trees,
Strength to worship You
On bended knees.

Give me Your open places,
Your silence supreme,
Give me the freedom
Of my daily dream.

Give me Your world things,
Your streams and Your hills;
Free me from conventions
That breed many ills.

Let me wander the old trails.
That lead through the wild,
As I did in the long ago
When I was a child.

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, p. 1.

To the Chechaco

Stranger from the Outside, on a sight-seeing trip
Of Alaska the Gold-land from the deck of a ship,
These words that you're reading were written for you,
Ev'ry detail is perfect ev'ry picture is true.

You came to Alaska to spend a few weeks,
Looking for glaciers and high mountain peaks.
Skimming the surface, never looking beneath.
Returning with knowledge, you speak and bequeath

To those on the Outside, who eagerly turn
And hark to the lesson you never did learn.
You curtail the facts because you don't know,
The Heart of Alaska where the Wonder-things grow.

(Take a trip 'round Ohio, never enter the state,
Then go to New York and try to relate
Some facts 'bout the center you never have seen;
Now do you savvy the Thing that I mean?

When I speak of your ignorance, of the Big Place up here.
The Place called Alaska, that you can't vision clear
From the decks of a steamer that rides on the tide,
For you can't know Alaska 'less you journey inside.)

Take a Dog-team or Pack-horse and hit the Long Trail,
That leads through a canyon where shadows are pale,
Cross the Big Muskeag, the Tundra and Swamp
Where the cranberries blossom and Silver-tips romp.

Climb Mt. McKinley and see where the sun.
Rests ev'ry evening when its day's work is done.
Head up a river with pack on your back.
Stalk the Big Moose when you find a fresh track.

Get you an outfit, pick, shovel and pan
And hunt for the Gold, with a pard who's a man.
See the Birch forests, the clear, babbling brooks.
Explore the Far-places, the gulches and nooks.

Gill net for salmon and dig for the clam.
Watch the wise beaver constructing his dam.
Gather the gull eggs far up on a cliff,
Sail the rough waters in dory or skiff.

Voyage the Yukon or far Kuskokwim
In flat-bottomed boat or Petersburg slim.
Fight the Mosquito, No-see-'em and Gnat,
Pot a fat duck on a reed-grown flat.

Mush with the dogs over long, snowy trail.
Hark to the North wind murmur and wail.
Walk on the snow-shoe, glide on the skii.
Wallow through snow clean up to your knee.

GET ON THE INSIDE, LIVE WITH THE MEN,
WHO HAVE STUCK TO ALASKA, LIKE WOLVES TO A DEN.
MEET PIONEER MUSER AND REAL OLD SOUR-DOUGH;
DO ALL THESE THINGS STRANGER AND THEN YOU WILL KNOW.

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, pp. 2-3.

The Trails of Alaska

Alaska trails are myriad trails,
The “Sour-dough” treads them all—
The Long Trails and the Short Trails,
Wherever he heeds the Call.

Some of the Trails are Smooth Trails,
Broad and level and straight.
Perfect as Man can make them.
Aided by God and Fate.

Some of the Trails are Sad Trails,
Paved with Sorrow and Fear,
Filled with the ghosts of blasted hopes.
And sprinkled with many a tear.

Some of the Trails are Gay Trails,
Filled with laughter and song.
Paved with the smiles of the happy.
And the joy of the care free throng.

Some of the Trails are Long Trails,
Crossing the desert of Life,
Filled with the bleached and scattered bones,
Of those who have died in the strife.

Some of the Trails are Short Trails,
Shaded by wonderful trees.
Where man may rest himself betimes
And spend glad hours at ease.

Some of the Trails are Evil Trails,
Ending where they begin,
Paved with blocks of Hypocrisy,
Shaded by trees of Sin.

Some of the Trails are Good Trails,
Built by a Master Hand,
Winding away for miles and miles
Till they reach the Promised Land.

All of the Trails are Branch Trails,
Leading away from the Main,
We may tread them all before we die.
But we all must come back again —

Back to the Big and Royal Trail,
Tore ever we come to die,
For this is the Trail of Life and Death,
Of the How and the When and the Why.

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, p. 4.

The Musings of a Sour-dough

While Confined in a Hospital with a Broken Leg

They brought me from my cabin 'cause my good right leg was broke.
They put me in this building where the damn air makes me choke.
They took me from the Open and caged me in this pen.
And they told me I must stay here 'till my leg gets well again.

You can bet your life I'm restless, for my thoughts keep goin' back.
To the spruce gulch and the windfall where I saw a marten track.
And my feet can't keep from itchin' for the trails I know so well.
'Cause the things that I keep seein' make me want to cuss and yell.

Why, I've heard the summer thunder in my ears the livelong day,
I have seen the lightning flashing on the hills across the way,
I have heard the bull-moose calling and the yapping of the fox.
And have watched the mallards flying in swiftly-moving flocks.

I've been hunting on the ridges where the huckleberries grow,
And the mountain sheep are playing in the everlasting snow.
Where the big brown bear is feasting on the luscious mountain fruit.
And the shadows of deep purple fill the canyons 'neath a butte,

I've been fishing in the rivers where the trout and greyling bide,
I've been poling on their waters that flow to meet the tide:
I have trapped the mink and marten and have robbed the seagull's nest.
And have seen again the sunsets on old Mother Nature's breast.

The spruce-hen and ptarmigan I have jumped along the trail
I have heard the South wind sighing and the North wind loudly wail,
I've driven snarling dog teams, with harness taut and tight.
And I've mushed across the tundra when the stars were shining bright.

I have crossed the swamp and muskeag with never trail or track.
I have carried sixty pounds of grub upon my aching back.
I've climbed the steepest mountain peaks, ten thousand feet or more,
I've slept at night among the trees on Mother Nature's floor.

I've trailed the pesky wolverine, the moose and caribou.
Have fished for cod and halibut, have trapped the salmon too,
I've skied and snowshoed many miles 'cross drift and frozen crust.
Have washed from bed rock on a creek a poke of shining dust.

I've stampeded with a thousand men whose only thought was haste.
Across a thousand weary miles of barren icy waste.
Have swapped my poke for wine and "Hootch," in dancing hall and den,
But now I'm lying helpless in this nurse and doctor pen.

And I keep a havin' visions of these things I love the best.
That you get in old Alaska, where a man is surely blest
With a myriad of real things, that are fashioned on a plan
Which a "Sour-dough" can't help seein' if he's sure enough a man

The leg will do for mushin' when it's knit again they say,
And when it is I'm headed for a camp that's far away.
Snuggled in among the mountains, where the eagle builds its nest
And an old Alaska "Sour -dough can sit him down and rest."

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, pp. 6-7.

Jerry's Grave Mistake

There's an old mound up at Dawson, where they buried Jerry Lake.
He died one night quite suddin' when he made a GRAVE mistake.
He was Dawson's holy terror with an auto-mat-ic gat,
But that night a stranger got him just below his Stetson hat.

Now Jerry's trick when shootin' was to grab a fellow's right,
Then draw his auto-mat-ic and the fellow said "good-night."
He worked it very nicely on several well armed men;
But Jerry got his needin's when he tackled Sitka Ben.

Jerry had been drinkin' and his thoughts were slightly blurred,
When he stumbled into Sitka and passed the fightin' word;
He grabbed young Sitka's right hand, when a funny thing took place,
Young Sitka was left-handed. Powder burned old Jerry's face.

It was just a simple error in old Jerry's working plan.
He never stopped to figger on a lefty shootin' man.
Thus the mound at Golden Dawson, where they buried Jerry Lake,
He quit this life quite sudden when he made a GRAVE mistake.

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, p. 8.

Alaska's Wonder Blazes

A Vision of a Sour-dough Now on the Outside

I'm a Sour-dough of Alaska
Who knows the Give and Take;
At Dawson, Nome, Iditarod,
I grabbed a handsome stake,
Then mushed it to the Outside

With all my Golden Pokes,
And invested them in business
That throttles me and chokes.

Today while working in my chair,
In office high up in the air,

Surcharged with smoke and other hazes;
My vision played a trick on me,
And set my eyes a roaming free.

Till once again I glimpsed the Wonder Blazes.

I saw the Blaze of Alaska, on the Blaze was a picture dear.
And the steaming haze of the housetops parted till it was clear.
It showed me the Trails now hidden, it pictured the mountains high.
The river sands, where with their hands, men pan for gold till they die.

It revealed the swamps and the forests, where the big moose live and the bear;
Where the ptarmigans nest, on the high hill's crest, where the black fox has his
lair.

It painted the bright aurora, that shines with a myriad lights,
As it brightens the snow, where the North winds blow, chill on the winter
nights.

It etched all the babbling mountain streams, the rifles where big trout play,
And the mountain sheep, as they frisk and leap, in the cool of a summer day.
It mirrored the haze of the wonderful days, in the land of the Midnight Sun,
And the gorgeous flowers, in their woodland bowers, and the webs that the
spiders spun.

It showed me the gold and the silver, the copper, the oil and coal.
With the caribou and the big wolf too, the drift and the prospect hole;
The white sea-gulls on the inland seas, the flight of the eagle bold.
The Silver Side and the Red Sockeye, that swim in the waters cold.

Showed a wonderful strand, in a glacier land and gleaming mountains of snow,
Where the wintry gales, fill full the trails, when it's forty or fifty below.

Showed boat and canoe, the rapids too, of rivers that swiftly glide.
Singing their song as they rush along, to join the ocean tide.

The malamute and the half-breed wolf, went flashing before my eye,
As they swung along, to the driver's song, with brush and head held high;

The yellow dust in the battered pan, the creek with its human jam.
The old road house on the winding trail, the cache by the beaver dam.

The pictures grew clearer and clearer, as they showed on the Wonder Blaze,
They showed me again old Alaska and the rush of the Golden Days,
Once more I was craving to wander, once more I was longing to roam.
On Alaska trails, where Man wins and fails, the Blazes were calling me home.

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, pp. 9–10.

What Need Have I?

Of all my friends I like to think.
While living here upon the brink
Of God's big out-of-doors.
My memory often travels back

Along the trails, where dimming track
Is fading from the worn floors.
Yet—
What need of living friends have I

Who have the sun, the moon, the sky
And many trails without an end?
I who have the things I seek,
The babbling brook, the mountain peak.

With many days to live and spend.
Man may have real worthy friends
Along the crooks and turns and bends
Of the years through which he lives.

But are these friends, to hear and see
So goodly as the forest tree
That never takes but always gives?
The sun, the stars, the moon for friends.

The winding trail that never ends,
The rivers wide and lesser streams.
Each one of all these things is real,
Each one I know, each one I feel;

These things I know are not mere dreams.
O man of puny human breed,
O man of narrow, selfish creed,
Man with your tiny deeds and fears;

Most helpless of the things of God,
An egotistical, brutish clod.
Of what avail your hopes and fears?
O woman of the shallow mind.

Your selfish, pleasure-loving kind
Holds sway but for a wee small hour;
You are fair for a short while.
Your hair, your eyes, your form, your smile
Are all surpassed by any flower.
O many, many friends have I,
Real women and real men;
And memory often leads me back
To spend sweet hours with them —
Yet—
What need of man or maid have I,
Who have for tent the distant sky.
And books all filled with golden words?
What need have I of worldly things,
When Nature full contentment brings
With friends of flowers and singing birds?

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, pp. 11–12.

Looking Back

The Old Sour-dough Talks

I was on the steamer Alameda, which was tied up at the dock,
She had brought two hundred tourists, dressed in nifty suit and frock;
People from the "Outside" who had booked to see the sights.
In the land of Gold and Dog-teams, Sour-doughs and Northern Lights.

On the dock among the home crowd was an ag-ed, whiskered man,
Who had mushed to ev'ry gold camp, with shovel, pick and pan,
Who had made a dozen clean-ups, from Forty-Mile to Nome,
Who had stayed in old Alaska and builded him a home.

He was watching all the strangers, when a fellow young and slim,
Stopped and asked a dozen questions that seemed to bother him;
But the old man only answered with a nodding of his head.
Until the lad had finished, then he spoke and slowly said:

"You say you're just tourin' Alaska.
Got a ticket on that there steam boat.
Paid one hundred and sixty simoleons.
To rubber at things while ye float.

"Bought passage from the States to old Juneau,
To Seward, Latouche and Valdez,
Just to glimpse a few towns and us "Sour-doughs",
Who are livin' up here where you freeze?

"Say stranger, while the boat is unloadin'
The freight from the depths of her hold.
Take a walk with me down to my cabin
And I'll tell ye some things 'bout the gold

"That we washed in old Nome and 'Dorado,
In Fairbanks and Dawson and here,
When the big rush was on in the Nineties
And a fellow could buy hootch and beer.

"Come in and sit by that table.
And I'll get you a glass of home-brew;
For a drink ye can't buy, since the law made it dry.
Drink it. Here's lookin' at you.

"Now hark and I'll tell ye a story
As true as the gospel ye know,
About a stampede and a long, hungry Swede
And a dog-team that raced through the snow,

"When the Swede with a thousand old-timers,
Stampeded and hit the long trail,
For a place that's close up to the Circle,
'Bout twenty-five days from the mail.

"We was washin' the tailin's near Dawson,
And dancin' and drinkin' good Hootch,
And some had a poke, while others were broke
And the by-words were Steal, Take or Mootch.

" 'T were a night when the old Borealis
Was outshinin' the moon and the star.
When a stranger blew into the Nigger's
And throwed a big poke on the bar.

"A wave of his arm were the invite.
For ev'ry damn man in the place;
His parka was froze and the end of his nose
Stuck out through the beard on his face.

"We drank and the story he told us
Was the cause of the damndest stampede,
Which started that night, 'neath the old Northern light,
And the first on the trail was the Swede.

"The Swede with his ten snarling wolf dogs
Was off like a bat out of hell.
And far down the trail, where the shadows were pale,
We could hear the sled creak and his yell.

"Shut your eyes young fellow and picture,
The scene as it were on that night;
The gold-maddened men, in that tough dancin' den;
The struggle, the scramble, the fight.

"To get an outfit for the mushin'.
Grub, clothin', a dog-team and sled,
To stake out a claim, that meant fortune and fame.
Or maybe a grave for the dead.

"In them days I was some skookum,
And I owned ten big malamutes;
And the second man out, on that long snowy route,
Was me with my swift-movin' brutes.

"Now the Swede as I said was a-leadin',
He'd a start of more than a mile,
When I yelled at 'em Mush, and was off with a rush,
With visions of gold in a pile.

"Now four hundred miles with a dog-team
Ain't like ridin' on boat or on train,
'Cause the damn piercin' cold sinks in and takes hold.
And fills your whole body with pain.

"But gold is a strong drawin' magnet.
Be it restin' on desert or ice,
And once it takes hold it will draw young and old.
And ev'ry darn one pays the price.

"Well them dogs that I driv' on that night, sir,
Was the finest 'tween Dawson and Nome,
All big malamutes and strong pullin' brutes
And the North with its snow was their home.

"Four days and the Swede never sighted;
Not a movement behind or before.
Not a ghost of a sign, but the fresh runner line.
Like marks on a white painted floor.

"Now the Swede was a brute with his dogs sir.
He'd cuss 'em and beat 'em and rave;
But this Circle Stampede was the end of the Swede;
He died, but he ne'er had a grave.

"How come it? Well listen I'll tell ye,
'Twas the eighth day and blowin' a gale.
When I come on three dogs froze stiffer than logs.
And the sled overturned on the trail.

"There was tracks and some blood on the snow sir.
And pieces of parka and boots.
What was left of the Swede, on the Circle stampede;
He'd been e't by his own wolfish brutes.

"There's the whistle a blowin' now stranger,
Don't be starin' as if you were doped,
'Tis the truth that ye've heard, take an old Sour-dough's word.
Who has suffered as much as he's hoped.

"And when you have finished your voyage.
Of seein' Alaska from ship,
Remember the Swede and the Circle Stampede
And the trails where it don't pay to slip."

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, pp. 13–15.

Gold Pan Pete

I've called the man a "panner" and we named him "Gold Pan Pete,"
Though he never seemed to have a streak of luck;
But with all his many failin's, he would pan the gravel tailin's,
Where a fortune very often had been struck.

He was what they called a "panner", from old Juneau up to Nome,
From Nome to Golden Fairbanks and Valdez.
Couldn't stand the Golden Fever, got a stake, then had to leave 'er.
And he rambled back to Seward by the seas.

Washed the placer down at Hyder, with a hopper and a spider,
But he couldn't find a color in the sand,
At Iditarod and Dawson, he staked a Golden crossin'.
Then left it for another rumored land.

Panned the creeks of El Dorado, roamed around in Colorado,
Hit the Verd-e mines they found at old Jerome,
Prospected the Mackenzie, when the place was in a frenzy.
To "Gold Pan" any placer creek was home.

Journeyed down to California, where the native sons sure scom-ye.
Washed the Siskiyou where it leaves the mountain side.
Then returned to old Alaska, where the Sour-doughs never ask-ya.
Any questions that will hurt your bloomin' pride.

Was in Goldfield and Bonanza and the land of old Carranza,
Where he drifted with a burro for a pard,
Twenty years he panned and dusted, very nearly always busted,
Then he struck it, 'bout a thousand to a yard.

'Twas a day when "Gold Pan" wandered, with his grub-stake almost
squandered
To a creek that emptied into Arctic sea.
Where a man without a creed and a filthy, drunken breed.
Were diggin' in the gravel that was free.

He watched them and the glitter of the gold dust made him bitter.
For he savvied that the creek was what he'd sought.
Through countless, weary ages, on the many lettered pages.
Of a life that had never brought him aught.

As he watched the pair a washin' and heard their drunken joshin',
He couldn't help but feelin' that his luck had petered out;
Then he saw the bank a slippin' and he heard a roar and rippin',
But the diggers never heard his warning shout.

For a thousand tons of gravel, when it's started sure can travel,
And it ain't no use to cuss it or to rave;
It buried breed and Squaw-man, 'fore the eyes of startled "Gold Pan,"
In a very, very handsome golden grave.

Then "Gold Pan" was the owner of the creek he called the Moaner;
He could wash the gleamin' gravel all alone.
So he started in a cleanin' with an object and a raeanin'.
For the nuggets and the dust were all his own.

He built him sluice and rocker and started in to block 'er.
And cleaned a hundred thousand on the spit.
Wasn't what you'd call a wonder, but it made him rich, by thunder,
'Fore the bodies in the gravel made him quit.

As he stacked his golden treasure, he could feel the joy and pleasure,
That had side-stepped all his efforts through the years,
That he'd spent in weary travel, washin' ruby sand and gravel,
While a livin' with his blasted hopes and fears.

He visioned many lost thing, home and wife and wedding ring,
As he wandered o'er the back-track many years,,
He saw again the faces in the old familiar places;
Faces full of laughter and of tears.

He was back in Indiana, with a girl named Susananna,
On a Sunday that had come in old September;
He could see her tearful eye, when he said his last good-bye;
Many things from out the past he did remember.

Now "Gold Pan" sluiced the sidin' of the creek where gold was hidin',
And washed the final color in his pan.
Then he fixed the cache quite tidy and left the place on Friday
To follow out his careful, well laid plan.

His head was rather dizzy, for his mind had been quite busy,
'Bout the people and the places where he'd go,
But he banished all the sadness and his heart was full of gladness,
As he slowly mushed the back trail through the snow.

On the sixth day he was cruisin' through a gulch where mud was oozin'
From the hillside, and the trail on which he trod.
When he heard a roar and rumble, felt the shake and saw the tumble;
Then he crossed the Great Divide to meet his God.

And a Bohunk who was spadin' where a railroad crew was gradin'.
Ten years later found his bones and poke of gold,
And this tale that I've related, an old Sour-dough simply stated.
Just the story 'bout Old Gold Pan that he told.

Pannin' gold since Ninety-seven. Struck the gold close up to Heaven,
Where the Circle bends beneath the Midnight Sun;
Then Mother Nature spilled him, when a snow slide come and killed him,
And his many days of pannin' all were done.

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, pp. 16–17.

Alone

The Young Alaska Pioneer in the Big Woods of Alaska

I miss you, my dear laughing lassie
When the sky is aflame in the West,
When the rain is a pouring
And the winds are a roaring

And the wild things have all gone to rest.
The rain dashes hard 'gainst the cabin,

The wind holds a sigh and a moan
And the damp, chilly air fills me full of despair;
I'm busy, but I am alone!

I call you, my dear, smiling lassie,

My voice carries far on the wind,
I reach forth my arms with a yearning,

But they hold aye the ghost of your kind.
I think of the love that you gave me

'Fore I left for this big, wooded zone;
And I shudder for life's so uncertain,

I'm working, but I am alone!

I want you, my dear, loving lassie.

Up here where a fellow is free,
I want you to hold as I did, dear, of old.

You would cuddle and nestle by me.
The storm and the rain would be banished.

The darkness and dreariness flown,
If you were but here, with me, sweetheart dear,

I'm willing, but I am alone!

I need you, my dear, winsome lassie.

My heart yearns by day and by night,
The miles that divide us seem endless.

The hours and the days none too bright.
There come to me visions of you dear,
So clear in this far Northern Zone,
That the blues are with-held and my doubts all dispelled;
I'm doing my work, but alone!
I miss you, I call you, I want you,
I need you, dear girl of my dreams;
Here all alone in Alaska
I am ever lonely it seems.
The stars and the moon are now shining,
And the storm has ceased with a tone
Of shrieking despair, far above in the air.
I'll finish, but I am alone!

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, p. 18.

The Trails Ahead

Show me the trails that wind ahead,
Where few men's feet have trod,
A camp fire bright and a spruce bough bed
And faith in the ways of God.

Inoculate me with the mystic lure
Of the myriad trails ahead.
As I walk on them in the early morn
When the rays of the sun are red.

Fill my soul with the Wanderlust,
My body with vigor and vim.
And let me live in the big Out-doors
With the free, wild things of Him.

Give me the urge that will carry me on.
Till it comes my time to die,
And I will never dispute the Law
Of the How, the When or the Why.

Never will I retrace my steps.
O'er trails through a past now dead.
In the future years my only home
Will be on the Trails Ahead.

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, p. 19.

The Hunger Cry of the Wolf

High on the hill
The wind is still,
No whispering, gentle sigh,
When to the ear.

Both loud and clear
Comes the wolf's bold hunger cry.
A weird, weird sound
That chills the blood

And wakes a sleeping fear,
Within the grouse.
The hare and mouse.
The moose and white-tail deer.

The hunger cry,
On hill so high,
Goes echoing around,
Until the night

So still and bright.
Excludes all other sound.
We hear the cry
And wonder why

Fear should so swiftly grow.
As to our kind
When brawn ruled mind
A thousand years ago.

The Hunger Cry of the big grey wolf,
Who hunts when the nights are still.
Brings fear to the heart of man and beast,
For it means, "I Kill, I Kill!"

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, p. 20.

When I Am Dead

The Old-Timer Meditates

When I am dead in the Afterwhile,
People will yet remember to smile;
But all I will ask that they do for me
Is to bury me 'neath a big spruce tree,

That will wave its branches over my head
To sweeten my sleep when I am dead.
A few may sneer and a few may sigh.
But I will not heed them as there I lie,

For thus it must be with Lover and Friend,
Love must finish and Friendship end.
If the men whom I knew in Alaska's woods,
Will drink me this toast, "He delivered the goods"

Why I, who so love them, one and all,
Will sleep in peace 'till the final call.
O' many may laugh and a few may weep.
But laughter and tears won't trouble my sleep,

For I shall be but a pile of dust,
A dried up body incased with rust.
My old malamute, Big-heart Pete,
Will run with the pack, when they hunt and eat;

He'll work in the lead on the same old sled
With the malamute pups when I am dead.
Big-Heart my dog and maybe Lee
May fail to smile when they think of me.

They'll strive to reason, but fail to guess
That Life is little and Death is less.
They both may sorrow a little space
Till someone elects to take my place.

But all their sorrow and grief and pain
They shall expend upon me in vain,
For I will never shed tear or smile,
When I am dead in the Afterwhile.

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, p. 21.

The River of Hope

There is a river that flows and flows,
Through the land of mountains, trees and snows;
I The "Sour-doughs" call it "River of Hope,"
That heads in the gulch of the steepest slope
Of a towering mountain capped with white.
That glistens and shines like a diamond bright.
A peak you can see for a hundred miles.
Raising its head in the Valley of Smiles,
Where the eagle lives and the mountain sheep
Romps and plays in the canyons deep;
Where the North wind rests for an hour or so,
Before it makes ready to howl and blow.
Where the big trout hide in riffle and pool
And the wild things are taught in Nature's school.

The River of Hope is a magical stream,
And each of its pools holds a captive dream,
A wonderful dream of some nomad bold
Who washed its sands in the quest for gold.
Dreams of opulence, days of ease,
Dreams of love and the feel on his knees
Of a little child of his blood and bone,
And the arms of a woman, her love his own.
Dreams of the power the gold would bring.
Wine that sparkled, women who sing,
Dreams of a mother and boyhood days.
Came to his mind through the golden haze
As he toiled by the side of his fellow man,
On the sandy bars with shovel and pan.
Some of his dreams were realized,
Others were lost or subsidized.
Many were born but soon dispelled
When never a color the black sands held.

But dreams are dreams, Wise Man's or Fool's,
And they sank in the waters and filled the pools
Of the River of Hope, that flows and flows.

Through the land of mountains, trees and snows.

River of Hope, where the sunlight gleams,
Your mirrored pools hold golden dreams.

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, p. 22.

With My Pipe

The Old Prospector Meditates

With my pipe in the hours of twilight,
As the smoke wreaths twist and curl
I sit and live old memories
Of friendship with many a girl.

Back in the haze and dimness.
Of the years that have flown by,
I can glimpse the many faces
That made me laugh or sigh.

Their lips as in yore are willing,
But the kisses I cannot feel,
Though yearning, pouting and smiling.
They come to me very real.

I thrill with anticipation.
As I puff at the glowing bowl.
I think of the old temptations.
Of body and mind and soul.

In the twilight I sit conjuring
The past that was filled with joy,
Seeing the girls I used to know
When I was a carefree boy.

The smoke wreaths form their faces,
Their eyes, their mouths, their hair;
As I sit among the shadows —
Every one of them is there.

Up here in old Alaska,
I have been most thirty years.
Removed from girls I used to know.
Their laughter, smiles and tears.

The years are passing swiftly.
But at times the world's my own.
When pipe and twilight shadows
Bring the girls that I have known.

There was Julia who punched the typewriter,
A clerk named Miss Ellinor,
Mamie and Zella and Jennie,
And Mazie who worked in a store.

I'll always remember dear Esther,
Whose hair was a golden brown.
And Ruthins, a dear little woman,
And Frances of chorus renown.

Marie, the cute little dancer.
Still holds a place in my mind
With Peggy, Mildred and Dolly,
Who were surely three of a kind.

There was Ethel so cold and stately.
And Hattie whose hair was a flame;
Etta and Mary and Paddy,
Gladys and Alva and Mame.

I'll never forget saucy Nonnie,
Nor Grace with eyes of light blue.
Nor Delia, nor Amy, nor Hannah,
Nor Johnnie, nor Sarah, nor Sue.

Marion, Myrtle and Rachel,
And dear little winsome Mae,
With Genevieve, Nellie and Clara,
Talk to me ev'ry day.

My pipe and the hours of twilight.
When the smoke wreaths twist and curl,
In my cabin here in Alaska,
Old memory sails unfurl.

And one my one the faces
Of the girls I used to know,
March smiling past, until the last.
Is blended with the glow.

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Elliott Jim

I met him one day on the Circle road,
Toting a gun and packing a load,
Consisting of grub and the hide of a bear;
Dirty he was, from his feet to his hair.

Two months' growth of beard on his chin,
Almost toothless and ugly as sin;
High top rubbers and patched mackinaw,
With a quid of tobacco stuck in his jaw.

He stopped when he saw me and when I reached him,
Says, "How-de-do stranger, I'm Elliott Jim,
Trapper of bear and other furred game,
The ketchin' of which has given me fame.

"Who might ye be and where might ye go?
A stranger I'm thinkin' I'd sure like to know;
Just sit on this log and I'll tell ye a tale.
Concerning a bear, a big grizzly male.

"He'd bust from the pen with a trap on his paw,
Early in spring, about the first thaw,
And totin' the trap that weighed forty pound,
I trailed the big critter 'cross ten miles of ground.

"Right to the mouth of a big, rocky den,
When a big rock a fallin' closed tight the pen;
Now there was the bear all sealed up tight,
And nothin' to move him except dynamite.

"So I gets me a stick and lighted a fuse.
Backs away twenty feet and started to muse
'Bout the size of the hide on that big grizzly bear.
When a mighty explosion shook the whole air.

"A ton of the rock just sailed through the air,
And fell on that meadow you see below there.
And the meadow was filled with moose, a big herd;
Now this is the truth, don't be doubtin' my word.

"When I tell ye the rock just killed twenty-four
Big fat moose and wounded a score.
And when I looked in the cave, I almost died,
'Cause the bear was blown clean out of his hide."

'Twas Elliott Jim who told me this tale,
The day we met on the Circle trail.
A bigger liar I never have met,
And the stories he told I will never forget.

Brown bear stories 'bout monstrous bear.
The breadth of their feet, the length of their hair.
The ten foot spread of a Kenai moose,
And the ptarmigan as big as a goose.

Gold strike stories 'bout golden poke;
The tale of the wolf he had to choke;
How he had killed a hundred teal,
With a shot that he aimed at a wounded seal.

Indian stories, gruesome and wild.
Murders of women and innocent child.
How he had captured Chief Big Boar,
Who raided his town and bathed in gore.

Tales of the woods and things he trapped
Were spun by the hour as the others napped.
The "Skinned Coyote" most split my side,
When it ran away minus its hide.

Now Jim was a type you all do know.
Here in this land of gold and snow,
Big-hearted devils of gypsy creed.
Pioneer trappers of sturdy breed.

Who believe all the tales they love to tell,
With never a thought of Heaven or Hell;
Not much education had Elliott Jim,
But Baron Munchausen had nothing on him.

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The Old Trails

To-night my thoughts are roaming
O'er the old trails I have trod;
I walked them with the Devil,
But never once with God.

I walked them with a Maiden,

The devil's closest kin.
An airy, fairy lassie

Who was suckled by Old Sin.

Her name? Intoxication.

How we roamed the crooked trails;
She was fickle, she was shallow,

And I suffered the travails.

She would laugh and jest and bubble
With an effervescent mirth,

That was naught but surface laughter
Of no worldly good or worth.

Yet she was fascinating

And I was but a fool,
Who hadn't learned my lessens

In Life's important school;

The school of vast experience.
Where the soul of man is cast

And sometimes flawed and twisted
Till his span of years has passed.

So Intoxication wooed me

And won me for a while;
When we trod the Trails of early days

She always seemed to smile.

She was a new and false sensation
And I came to know her well.

As we walked the trails together —
The crooked trails to Hell

In the ev'ning 'neath the bright lights
Of Pleasure she seemed born,

But one morning gray I glimpsed her
As she was, of glamour shorn.

When I saw I quick divorced her

And cast her from my life,
And I ceased to walk the old trails Where trouble's always rife.

But the Maiden often haunts me,
With her shallow, fickle smile

As I walk the new and stranger trails
Seeking things worth while;

And at times I often wonder

Like old Omar in the past,
If she does not help the Big Sun His brightest sunshine cast.

The

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The Babbling Brook's Answer

The Man Asks:

Babbling brook of the mountains,
Fed by the melting snows,
Speeding along o'er the mossy stones
Where is it your water flows?

Babbling brook of the forest,
Flowing through thicket and glade.
Dashing madly through canyons
Where shadows of purple fade.

Where does your water go to,
As it tumbles and splashes down
The mighty crags of the mountains,
From the height of their snowy crown?

The Brook Answers:

Curious man from the city.
Free from your daily task.
Bend your head and come closer,
I'll answer the questions you ask.

Where does my water go to,
Where does it flow and flow?
These are the questions you've asked me.
These are the things you would know?

Some of it goes to the Wild Things
To keep them from suffering thirst;
Thus it was planned by Nature and God,
My water for them comes first.

The sleek black bear and the silver-tip.
The wolf, the moose and the deer,
Ptarmigan, spruce-hen and myriad birds
Drink of my waters clear.

The busy squirrel, the mouse and the mole.
The porcupine, weasel and mink.
And the eagle bold, the owl and the hawk
Come to my banks to drink.

Some of my water goes to the Sun,
And some of it feeds these trees,
But most of it to the river flows
And finds its way to the seas

Where it mingles with other waters
That flow from a thousand streams;
Till it reaches the Land of Promise —
On an Isle of Wonderful Dreams.

Curious man from the city
Have I answered your questions well?
Is there aught that I failed to mention.
Is there more you would have me tell?

Then man from the crowded city.
Drink once more ere you go.
Quench your thirst with my waters
That swiftly and gladly flow.

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At Times

At times I like to be alone,
I'm not set 'gainst nice friendly ways,
Or prayin' much for lonely days,
But when alone where all is still.
On mountain high or smaller hill,
All by myself, somehow I feel
That Life is wonderful and real,
And that the earth's just flowing o'er
With things I've never sensed before.

At times when I am all alone,
I've talked with many kinds of birds,
And they have answered me with words.
And flowers of many colored kinds.
Strange blossoms with their perfumed minds.
Have nodded to me as I strolled.
Or touched me as I stretched and lolled
Upon the warm earth 'neath a tree
That whispered forest lore to me.

At times it's nice to be alone
And listen to the North wind blow
Along the trails all white with snow,
Or hear the gentle, murm'ring breeze
Of the South wind through the trees.
And watch the sun on mornings rise
And streak with red the distant skies,
'Tis then that God appears to me.
And with His eyes I clearly see.

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, p. 29.

Red Blood

God!—how it flows through my veins to-day;
How it bids me cease work and go play.
How it pulls at the bonds that are holding me here.
How it brings to my mind the real things I hold dear.

The swing of the bat, the loud sounding crack
As it meets the ball, the dust on the track
Where the horses are running, the throng and the cries.
Then the whirl of a wing as the swift mallards rise,
The echoing shot, the hit, then the splash;
The still, virgin woods, the hunt and the crash
When the big Kenai moose breaks cover and runs.
The Red Blood flows mad with the sound of the guns.

God! — how it always flows and flows,
How it carries me back to the Land of Snows,
To a wonderful land of gleaming gold.
Where monster glaciers are ages old.

Here where I'm tied to the sordid things.
My heart beats free and the Red Blood sings;
Sings me this song, "You are Red Blooded".
Sings till my soul is quickly flooded,
Like a lowland where a dam has burst its bonds.
Once again I live the olden days
On Arctic trail and desert ways;
Again I see the dog-teams and the miraged ponds.

I choke with thirst and freeze again,
In desert heat and snow and rain;
Once more I feel the Silence of the Open Places,
Where a man must be a man.
Who is fashioned from the plan
Of the Red Blooded, never-dying, virile races.
God! — how it flows through my veins each day,
The rich Red Blood, how it makes me pray.
Compels me to feel the Lure and Call,
Convinces me I will end it all
For the Freedom of the Open —

Its spell and fascination,
For the countless things of beauty In its wonderful creation.
I have heard the Call, I have felt the Lure
For the Red Blood makes me feel,
It has taught to me the lesson
That Life is very real

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, p. 32.

I Want You So

The Thoughts of a Young Prospector Alone in the Hills

My tired back aches 'neath the cuss-ed pack,
As I mush through the canyons deep,
The cool creek babbles to shining sun
And the winding trail grows steep.

The hill breeze murmurs, now high, now low.
It makes me lonely. I want you so.
The snows have melted since I saw you last,
The trout are climbing the creeks,

The days and the weeks are fleeting fast.
And far above the peaks,
I can see the moon that we used to know;
The wolves are howling. I want you so.

The stars and the moon wait the end of time.
But my hopes grow gray and black;
I slip and tumble as the trail I climb,
A man who will gaze back

To days that died many moons ago.
The birds are singing. I want you so.
I had sworn to banish the thought of thee,
When the days were long and blue,

I shackled the heart that beats in me
And laughed at the ghost of you.
But always you follow wherever I go;
The winds are sighing. I want you so.

I see you at every crook and turn
Of the trail that is winding its way.
See you in dreams when I sleep at night
And vision you through all the day.

The love fires kindle and burn and glow,
And my heart beats fast, for I want you so.
The days and the nights, the sun and the moon,
All blend in the canyons pale.

The old north wind sings a solemn tune
As the clouds o'er the mountain sail;
My thoughts take flight with the winds that blow.
My life grows shorter. I want you so.

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, p. 33.

The Chinook Wind

The Chinook Wind was blowing through the gulches and the hills,
You could hear the joyful babbling of the tiny flowing rills,
All the mountain streams torrential, through the forests madly whirled —
Chinook was chasing Winter with her banners all unfurled.

The ptarmigan were strutting 'mongst the willows on a log.
The big bull-moose was wading in the steaming meadow bog,
You could hear the squirrels chatter and the blue-jays loudly scold.
For Chinook was warm and balmy when Old Winter lost its hold.

The chickadees were happy and the bear were on the hills,
And the mountain trout were leaping from the riffles and the rills,
'Twas spring time in Alaska, in the land of Big Out-doors,
Chinook was gently blowing on Mother Nature's floors.

The forget-me-not and violet were stirring 'neath the soil.
The birds had started nesting and the buds were in a foil,
The new green grass was sprouting where the white sheep frisked and played.
And Chinook among the tree-tops, gently murmured as they swayed.

The ice had left the rivers and was floating out to sea.
The tern and gull were mating on the bleak and rocky lea.
The sky was clear as crystal, and we offered up a prayer.
And thanked the Lord for living, on that Spring-time morning rare.

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, p. 35.

The Alaska Skeeter

Many bards have sung their lays,
Many poets scribed their muse,
About a thousand subjects
That cheer you and enthuse;

But of all the thousand subjects,
Beating hearts and birds that tweeter,
No Kipling, Burns or glib Masonic writer.
Has ever writ in verse the "Laska Skeeter."

Now I who write am not a famous poet.
Nor a rhymmer, nor a verser, nor a bard,
So if the meter doesn't meet.
As I scribe the damn moskeet.
Overlook it 'cause the subject sure is hard.

As my pencil slowly writes,
I can feel their stinging bites,
And can hear 'em always buzzing
Like a swarm of angry bees.
I am swatting 'em and slamming 'em,
I am cussing 'em and damning 'em.
On my forehead, on my fingers, on my knees.

There is netting on the door.
And a smudge upon the floor.
And coal-oil on the lonely window pane,
But they thrive upon the oil.
And the netting doesn't foil.
While the choking, yellow smudge
Just burns in vain.

I have burned a thousand powders,
And have used a hundred dopes
That were guaranteed to kill 'em and destroy,
But in powder and in dope
I have lost all faith and hope,
'Cause they fill the "Laska Skeeter" full of joy.

In the tundra and the muskeag
And along the river banks.
You will find the "Laska Skeeter"
With his strip-ed, hairy shanks;
You will find him always ready
With his buzz and sting and bite.
To worry you and hurry you
Throughout the day and night.

You can use to double head-net
And a pair of heavy gloves,
While prospecting 'long the
Rivers and the creeks,
But with hands and face protected,
Other spots are soon selected,
Which they perforate with
Drill and tempered beaks.

They can drill a rubber boot.
Or a heavy leather shoe.
And a pair of woolen socks or maybe two.
For their bills are double-jointed.
Telescopic and steel pointed
And it doesn't take 'em long to push 'em through.

There's the big and hairy devil
That buzzes ere he bites.
Buzzes like a saw a-cutting logs,
His damn persistent buzzing awakens you of nights.
Like an auto brake a-stripping all the cogs.

The bumble bee and humming bird
Can buzz and hum a bit.
And the dynamo can sing a lusty lay,
But the pesky "Laska Skeeter",
With its loud and angry tweeter.
Can drown them all together any day.

Then you find the little devil.
Who is never on the level;
The one who laughs at window, door and net.
He will locate ev'ry crack

With uncanny, certain knack;
He causes you to worry, cuss and fret.

You can kill 'em by the score,
But you always find some more,
Waiting for a chance to sting and bite.
And they do this on the wing.
Buzz and bite and madly sting,
Never waiting 'till they find a place to light.

Old New Jersey has a skeeter
That is vicious and depraved.
The South has many skeeters
That are far from well behaved,
And along the Mississippi
From its mouth to Fond-du-Lac,
You will find a billion skeeters Always waiting to attack.
Minnesota also has 'em and the Panama Canal,
In any swampy jungle they will choose you for a pal.
You will find them on Long Island,
And around the Puget Sound;
In Sunny California and New Mexico they're found.

But gather them together —
All these species from Outside;
Bring 'em all together
From the places they abide.
Then compare them with the skeeter
That I mention in these lines.
And you'll find the "Laska Skeeter"
When he's hungry for a lunch.
The meanest, om'ry critter
Of the whole damn bunch!

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, pp. 36–38.

Broken Glass

A bunch of 'Laska pioneers were swapping tales one night,
About the days of Gold and Hootch, the Struggle and the Fight;
To win a Stake and get a Poke that weighed one hundred pound.
Where creeks had turned to glaring ice, 'tween banks of frozen ground.

Each Sour-dough told his tale of Gold and how he Won or Lost
A fortune where the flinty ground held many years of frost.
How many came and many went, who sought the gleaming gold;
Now all the tales I'd heard before, but one MacDonald told.

Says Mac, "You've heard some tales tonight, about the curs-ed metal
That plucks the years from out your lives, as maiden plucks the petal,
From off a flower to ascertain, the truth about her lover;
Now let me tell you all a tale you won't find 'tween a cover.

" 'Twas just about the time that Nome was in her golden glory.
When I with English Jim for pal, packed outfit into dory
And headed south most eighty miles, for place we never doubted.
Bluff City was the golden spot, which had been muchly touted.

"Well, English Jim and I arrived, without a sign of trouble,
Located claims and built a shack, where we could prick the bubble.
Installed a sluice and two search lights, whose eyes were bright and glaring.
So we could see to work at nights and keep a perfect bearing.

"Now English was a human sponge; his thirst was always mighty.
And when with liquor he was soused, his mind was rather flighty.
You've all heard tell of Austin Pete, whose saloon was in Bluff City,
You all have tasted Hootch and Beer and sung a little ditty.

"We'd worked the claims for 'bout a month, in manner very steady.
When English says to me one night, 'Mac lad, I sure am ready
To take a poke, before I choke, and chill this burning fever.
That parches throat and gets your goat. What say tonight we leave 'er

"And take a stroll to save our soul, by drinking beer and lick.
At Austin Pete's, where Sour-dough meets, to argue, lie and dicker.'
Says I to him, 'You're talking Jim, along a line I'm thinking,
There's nothing more I'd like to do than spend a while a-drinking.'

" 'Twas early morn, when frost is born, before we quenched the burning
And twenty quarts, of many sorts, went with us when returning;
And twenty quarts of bottled beer, each day we kept a getting
From Austin Pete's, with little eats to stabilize the wetting.

"Now we were stewed and quite imbued with many foolish notion.
When word was brought that some were caught, on ice-floe in the ocean.
A party of Bluff City men, en route for homes and Christmas,
Were headed out, without a doubt, some miles beyond the Isthmus.

"Among the men was Sitka Ben, a mighty skookum Lusher,
Who English knew, as I know you. A Sour-dough and a musher.
And English when he heard that Ben was floating on the ocean,
Conceived a plan to save the man. A drunken damn-fool notion.

"There in the shack, says he, Old Mac, you've heard the tragic story
About old Ben and other men, afloat on ice-floe hoary.
Afloat on wicked ocean wave, with all their hopes a-dashing.
With your permission Mac tonight, I'll take aloft the big searchlight and start
the thing a-flashing.'

"Now we'd caroused and sure were soused, both English and Yours Truly;
For most a week we'd hit the peak in manner quite unruly.
Therefore when English asked to go, I said "You are a hero.
Go take the light into the night, where it is touching zero.'

" 'Take full charge Mac, of claims and shack and hold them till tomorrow.
And I will climb with light sublime and pierce this night of sorrow.'
Thus English spoke, then slammed the door and left me there to wonder,
In drunken daze, about the ways of men who live and blunder.

"The play was staged. A blizzard raged. The trail was steep and ragged.
The man was drunk, fit for his bunk. The rocks were sharp and jagged.
The search light was a monstrous thing and never built for toting
Up mountain side, to shine on tide, where ice-floe was a floating.

"Two hours went by, and I was dry and feeling like the devil.
For booze will make your nerves all shake and drag you b'low the level;
When I heard a feeble cry, like someone who was slipping;
I opened door and on the floor, fell English red and dripping.

"He was all slashed and badly gashed. His clothes were all in tatters.
His face was cut and full of smut, but detail little matters;
The awful sight quick sobered me. I thought he sure would ramble

To other clime, where tide or time, don't figure in the gamble.

"I stripped his clothes, all stiff and froze, and bathed the cuts and dressed them,
And heard him rave that he would save. He damned them all and blessed them.
He'd take the light up on the hill, regardless of the blizzard.
And show them all, that he had gall, and nerve like Jerry Izzard.

"Then sighing deep, he fell asleep and never groaned or muttered,
And only I, could savvy why, his life so nearly fluttered.
He tried to help a friend he knew, a friend who was in danger.
He'd have played the game and done the same, if Ben had been a stranger.

"The blizzard spawned. The morning dawned, with floe and men discovered.
And English Jim. May God bless him; his trail I quick uncovered —
Straight up the mountain most a mile, I found the crooked line.
But of the track, that he took back, I never saw a sign.

"It disappeared where rock-ledge reared, its head above the snow.
But here and there, where side was bare, a dent would plainly show
Where something hard had left a mark; a something big and round
Had bounded swift, from rock and drift, and stamped the frozen ground.

"With deep resolve, I tried to solve, this track I couldn't class,
When far below, stuck in the snow, I found a piece of glass;
And then I knew just what it was had butchered Jim that night;
He'd fell inside and took a ride, in the bloody old search light.

"And locked within, that battered tin, with shattered broken glass,
Old English Jim, with chances slim, had rode the rocky pass.
I found the light close to the shack, not more than eighty rod,
And puzzled much, but couldn't clutch, the many ways of God."

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, pp. 39–41.

The Silence

I have heard words in the Silence,
That shall never be voiced by man,
I have heard words, wonderful words.
In the darkness which I never could scan.

I have watched alone in the Silence,
And I've listened to wonderful songs,
Songs never sung by us humans
As we struggle and tug at our thongs.

Voices have broken the Silence,
Voices so ringing and clear.
That each spoken word, my whole being stirred,
As it fell on my listening ear.

I am happy at times in the Silence,
Cheerful, contented and glad.
But also at times I am pensive.
And lonely and tearful and sad.

Alone day and night in the Silence,
I've clutched at the favors Life flings.
Getting my share as I roamed here and there.
And the pleasure the mere clutching brings.

Of the friends I have made while a roaming.
The Silence has proved to be best.
Though woman and man have polished the plan,
Give me Silence and take all the rest.

And to wander alone in the Silence,
Is to me a most wonderful thing.
When I do live all my dreams out.
For the Silence has taught me to sing.

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, p. 42.

An Alaskan Lake

Your waters gleaming,
The sunlight streaming,
Then darkness earthward crawls;
The sun's last glimmer
Grows dimmer, dimmer.
Night's curtain slowly falls.

Your waves a-moaning.
Restless and groaning,
Pounding shore, in varied size;
The fog ascending,
With clouds is blending.
The stars are blinking their eyes.

Your waters swelling.
With murmur telling
A story ages old.
Now dashing madly,
Then crying sadly.
Seeming at times to scold.

Then capped with froth,
Your waves grow wroth.
And angry lash the shore;
With clouds of spray
Through night and day.
Emitting sullen roar.

Your waters peaceful.
Calm and ceaseless
With just a gentle roll;
Bring me contentment,
Banish resentment
And soothe my heart and soul.

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, p. 43.

The North West Wind and the North West Land

The North West Wind and the North West Land
Are wonderful things to me.

The Wind as it blows and blows and blows,
The Land that is washed by the sea.
Many a thousand miles I've roamed,

On many a foreign strand,
But never a wind like the North West Wind,
Nor a land like the North West Land.

The North West Wind is a powerful wind

When it sways the mighty trees.
It's a cold and treacherous, bitter wind

On the nights when the rivers freeze.
It's an angry wind and a raving wind

When the blizzards rage and roar.
At times its' a soothing, restful wind

As it blows through the cabin door.
It's a gentle wind through the summer days.

Fragrant with scent of pine;

A sighing, caressing, pleading wind

That rustles the clinging vine.
It's a cooling wind, a refreshing wind

That tempers the summer days,
It's a care-free wind and a restless wind

That sings and dances and plays
Over and through the North West Land,

From inland river to sea.

Decking the waves with snow white caps

And swaying the forest tree.

From the Arctic seas, with their ice-bound coasts
And thousands of years of snow,
To the prairies covered with golden wheat
The North West Wind does blow.
For thousands of miles the Wind holds sway,
From the Yukon to Puget Sound;
On the highest crest of the Rocky Range,
It howls with a fearsome sound.
It blows and blows o'er the North West Land
Where people are strong and free.
Where the Big Places are and Life is Real,
And every one has a key
To the Garden of Health and the Bower of Joy,
And the Kingdom of Big Out-Doors;
Where they follow the Trails that wind away
Through meadow and woodland floors.
The North West Wind and the North West Land
Are wonderful things to me.
The Wind as it blows and blows and blows.
The Land that is washed by the sea.
Many a thousand miles I've roamed,
On many a foreign strand.
But never a Wind like the North West Wind,
Nor a Land like the North West Land.
Page forty-four.

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, p. 44.

The Lure of the Untrod Trails

The trails untrod by the feet of men
Are luring me on today;
The untrod trails of forest and stream
Bid me to come and stay.

The bright camp-fire with its tongue of red.
The smell of the pungent smoke.
The yap and the snarl of the husky team
The leader of which I broke.

The cry of the gulls, the glint of the gold,
The Northern Lights in the sky.
The roaring sound of the rapids swift.
The holes where the big trout lie.

The track of moose in the virgin snow.
The babble of myriad streams,
The mountains high where the mad winds blow.
Are all a part of my dreams.

I want to climb to the top of a hill,
Some thousands of feet in the air,
Where the bald eagle lives and rears her young
And the wolf hob-nobs with the bear;

Where you see the sun as it rises and sets
And the Silence is tense and still.
In the Magical Land of Untrod Trails
That wind through forest and hill.

These things are part and parcel of me;
The Mountains, the Trees, the Trails,
And the Lure that I feel will carry me on
When Love and mere Friendship fails.

The lure of the trails untrodden by men
Grows strong as the days flit by,
A yearning I can describe with words
Brings tears to my dimming eye.

Magical antidote for Love,
Though sprinkled with women's tears.
Found in your lure, is a marvelous cure
And a future of wonderful years.

A lone free lance of the Big Out -Doors,
With nothing to draw me back.
As I tread once more the Untrod Trails,
With rifle, snow-shoes and pack.

Publication. First published in *Alaska Nuggets*. Anchorage: Alaska Publishing Company, 1921, p. 45.

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Internet Archive and HathiTrust digital witnesses for the 1916, 1917, 1918, and 1921 collections; Open Library and Library of Congress catalogue records for later editions.

TEXTUAL NOTE

Witness, lineation, typography, and exclusions

The copy-texts are complete digital witnesses of *Mexican Border Ballads* (Douglas, Arizona, 1916), *American Soldier Ballads* (Los Angeles, 1917), *Rhymes in Khaki* (Boston, 1918), and *Alaska Nuggets* (Anchorage, 1921). The four scans were read page by page and collated against their OCR. Original title pages, contents, page numbers, illustrations, and publisher matter remain in the source archive.

All 116 distinct poems are reset as live text. Every poem begins on a new page. A line divided only because it reached the edge of the original printed page has been rejoined; if it wraps in this six-by-nine setting, the continuation returns to the poem margin rather than receiving a false hanging indent. True inset lines, stepped refrains, numbered movements, dialogue labels, and authorial subheads remain.

Stanza divisions follow visible source spacing rather than OCR blank lines, page boundaries, decorative initials, or the gaps surrounding illustrations. Drop-cap openings have been restored to ordinary grammatical capitalization. Epigraphs, dedications, subtitles, and Camp's prose notes receive distinct typographic treatments but retain their wording.

The earliest witness is used when the same poem recurs. Five later printings are therefore omitted from the reading sequence: "The Lost Water-Hole and the Hidden Trail" and "The Human Forest" in *Rhymes in Khaki*, and "When Wilt Thou?" "The Lost Water Hole and the Hidden Trail," and "The Human Forest" in *Alaska Nuggets*. Their later appearances are recorded in the structured corpus and production audit.

Camp revised freely when moving poems between books, especially when a border-specific poem became a general army poem. Substantially recast works are retained when they constitute separate poems; simple reprints are not. The four unique items taken from the highly illustrated *Mexican Border Ballads* were proofed against high-resolution page images, including the hand-lettered "Song of the Human Toothpick in God's Unfinished Land."

Recognition errors, running folios, marginal scan text, library stamps, broken drop capitals, and decorative debris have been removed by comparison with the page images. Legible period diction, nonstandard grammar, ethnic language, and Camp's deliberate roughness remain. Editorial correction is limited to unmistakable mechanical damage and physical line wraps; it does not silently modernize the poems.

Publication notes after every poem identify its source book and printed page span. The 1932 *War and Peace* and the 1942 *American Soldier Ballads in the Language of an Army Man* are bibliographically documented but excluded because no complete, unrestricted, rights-cleared witness was available. Editorial prose italicizes all book and periodical titles.

COLOPHON

Production record

Designed and edited in Los Angeles in 2026 for *Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry*. Six by nine inches; mirrored 66/48-point margins; EB Garamond; cream page field; live-text Green cover system.

The cover uses original contemporary collage artwork prepared for this edition: a monumental army mess kit and ladle hang above a line of canvas tents, joined by a single orange thread. The portrait artwork is cropped edge to edge within the standard Green upper art panel, above the orange separator and navy title field. The complete historical *Mexican Border Ballads* cover appears in the archival section.

The four source scans, proofed structured text, research downloads, catalogue records, documentary images, cover art, final lettered cover, fonts, build code, source manifest, research change log, and full-page QA renders are preserved in the poet's completed folder.