

SONG OF THE SETTLERS BY JESSAMYN WEST

Freedom is a hard-bought thing –
A gift no man can give,
For some, a way of dying,
For most, a way to live.

Freedom is a hard-bought thing –
A rifle in the hand,
The horses hitched at sunup,
A harvest in the land.

Freedom is a hard-bought thing –
A massacre, a bloody rout,
The candles lit at nightfall,
And the night shut out.

Freedom is a hard-bought thing --
An arrow in the back,
The wind in the long corn rows,
And the hay in the rack.

Freedom is a way of living,
A song, a mighty cry.
Freedom is the bread we eat;
Let it be the way we die!

ANSWERING HIM BY EDGAR A. GUEST

“When shall I be a man?” he said,
As I was putting him to bed.

“How many years will have to be
Before Time makes a man of me?

And will I be a man when I
Am grown up big?” I heaved a sigh,
Because it called for careful thought
To give the answer that he sought.

And so I sat him on my knee,
And said to him: “A man you’ll be
When you have learned that honor brings
More joy than all the crowns of kings;

That it is better to be true
To all who know and trust in you
Than all the gold of earth to gain
If winning it shall leave a stain

“When you can fight for victory sweet,
You bravely swallow down defeat,
And cling to hope and keep the right,
Nor use deceit instead of might;

When you are kind and brave and clean,
And fair to all and never mean;
When there is good in all you plan,
That day, my boy, you’ll be a man.

THE WIND BY E. RENDALL

Why does the wind so want to be
Here in my little room with me?
He's all the world to blow about,
But just because I keep him out
He cannot be a moment still,
But frets upon my window-sill.
And sometimes brings a noisy rain
To help him batter at the pane.

Upon my door he comes to knock.
He rattles, rattles at the lock
And lifts the latch and stirs the key --
Then waits a moment breathlessly,
And soon, more fiercely than before,
He shakes my little trembling door,
And though "Come in, Come in!" I say,
He neither comes nor goes away.

Barefoot across the chilly floor
I run and open wide the door;
He rushes in and back again
He goes to batter door and pane,
Pleased to have blown my candle out.
He's all the world to blow about,
Why does he want so much to be
Here in my little room with me?

COLUMBUS BY LARAIN ELOISE JACOBSON

In fourteen-hundred-ninety-two
Columbus sailed away
To try to reach rich India
By a much shorter way.

Columbus said, "The world is round."
But others said, "It's flat –
If you sail far you might fall off."
Columbus laughed at that.

And yet he found out that his trip
Took longer than he planned,
For it was many, many weeks
Before they sighted land.

Any then they weren't in India
For when they stepped ashore
They found no silks or spices –
But they really found much more.

Yes there Columbus stood upon
An unknown continent –
Columbus found America,
And quite by accident.

A WINDY DAY BY WINIFRED HOWARD

Have you been at sea on a windy day
When the water's blue
And the sky is too,
And showers of spray
Come sweeping the decks
And the sea is dotted
With little flecks
Of foam, like daisies gay;

When there's salt on your lips,
In your eyes and hair,
And you watch other ships
Go riding there?
Sailors are happy,
And birds fly low
To see how close they can safely go
To the waves as they heave and roll.

Then, wheeling, they soar
Mounting up to the sky,
Where billowy clouds
Go floating by!
Oh, there's fun for you
And there's fun for me
At sea
On a windy day!

A WRECKER OR A BUILDER BY EDGAR A GUEST

I watched them tearing a building down,
A gang of men in a busy town.
With a ho-heave-ho and a lusty yell
They swung a beam and the side wall fell.

I said to the foreman,
“Are these men skilled,
And the ones you’d hire
If you had to build?”

He gave a laugh and said, “No, indeed,
Just common labor is all I need.
I can easily wreck in a day or two
What builders have taken a year to do.”

And I thought to myself,
As I went my way
“Which of these roles
Am I trying to play?”

Am I shaping my life
To a well made plan,
Patiently doing the
Best that I can?

Am I doing my work
With the utmost care,
Measuring life
By the rule and square?

Or am I a wrecker
Who wrecks the town
Content with the labor
Of tearing down?”

BRIGHTEN THE CORNER WHERE YOU ARE BY HELEN STEINER RICE

We cannot all be famous
Or listed in "Who's Who,"
But every person great or small
Has important work to do,
For seldom do we realize
The importance of small deeds,
Or to what degree of greatness
Unnoticed kindness leads --
For it's not the big celebrity
In a world of fame and praise,
But it's doing unpretentiously
In undistinguished ways,
The work that God assigned for us,
Unimportant as it seems,
That makes our task outstanding
And brings reality to dreams -

So do not sit and idly wish
For wider newer dimensions,
Where you can put in practice
Your many good intentions -
But at the spot God placed you
Begin at once to do
Little things to brighten up
The lives surrounding you,
For if everybody brightened up
The spot on which they're standing.
By being more considerate
And a little less demanding,
This dark cold world could very soon
Eclipse the Evening Star
If everybody brightened up
The corner where they are.

BATTLE-HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC BY JULIA WARD HOWE

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword:
His truth is marching on.

I have seen him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps;
They have builded him an altar in the evening dews and damps;
I can read his righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps:
His day is marching on.

I have read a fiery gospel, writ in burnished rows of steel:
“As ye deal with my condemners, so with you my grace shall deal;
Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with his heel,
Since God is marching on.”

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before his judgment seat:
O, be swift, my soul to answer him! Be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me;
As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on.

He is coming like the glory of the morning on the wave,
He is wisdom to the mighty, he is honor to the brave,
So the world shall be his footstool, and the soul of wrong his slave,
Our God is marching on!

A MOTHER'S LOVE BY HELEN STEINER RICE

A Mother's love is something
that no one can explain,
It is made of deep devotion
and of sacrifice and pain,
It is endless and unselfish
and enduring come what may
For nothing can destroy it
or take that love away...
It is patient and forgiving
when all others are forsaking,
And it never fails or falters
even when the heart is breaking...
It believes beyond believing
when the world around condemns,
And it glows with all beauty
of the rarest, brightest gems...
It is far beyond defining,
it defies all explanation,
And it still remains a secret
like the mysteries of creation...
A many-splendored miracle
man cannot understand
And another wondrous evidence
of God's tender guiding hand.

THE LIBRARY BY BARBARA A. HUFF

It looks like any building
When you pass it on the street,
Made of stone and glass and marble,
Made of iron and concrete.
But once inside you can ride
A camel or a train,
Visit Rome, Siam, or Nome.
Feel a hurricane,
Meet a king, learn to sing,
How to bake a pie,
Go to sea, plant a tree,
Find how airplanes fly,
Train a horse, and of course
Have all the dogs you'd like,
See the moon, a shady dune,
Or catch a whopping pike.
Everything that books can bring
You'll find inside those walls.
A world is there for you to share
When adventure calls.
You cannot tell its magic
By the way the building looks,
But there's wonderment within it,
The wonderment of books.

REAL SINGING BY EDGAR A. GUEST

You can talk about your music, and your operatic airs,
And your phonographic record that Caruso's tenor bears;
But there isn't any music that such wondrous joy can bring
Like the concert when the kiddies and their mother start to sing.

When the supper time is over, then the mother starts to play
Some simple little ditty, and our concert's under way
And I'm happier and richer than a millionaire or king
When I listen to the kiddies and their mother as they sing.

There's a sweetness most appealing in the trilling of their notes:
It is innocence that's pouring from their little baby throats;
And I gaze at them enraptured, for my joy's a real thing
Every evening when the kiddies and their mother start to sing.

The Mole and The Eagle By Sarah Josepha Hale

The mole is blind and under ground,
Sung as a nest her home is found;
She dwells secure, nor dreams of sight --
What need of eyes where all is night!

The eagle proudly soars on high,
Bright as the sunbeams is his eye --
To lofty rocks he wings his way,
And sits amid the blaze of day.

The mole needs not the eagle's eye,
Unless she had his wings to fly --
The light of day no joy would give,
If under ground she still must live.

And sad't would for the eagle be,
If like the mole, he could not see,
Unless you took his wings away.
And shut him from the hope of day.

But both live happy in their way --
One loves the night - and one the day --
And God formed each, and formed their sphere,
And thus his goodness doth appear.