

Grace Atherton Dennen Selected Poems



Grace Atherton Dennen

1874 [Woburn, Massachusetts] –

1927 [Los Angeles, California]

Sed ut perspiciatis unde omnis iste natus error sit voluptatem accusantium doloremque laudantium, totam rem aperiam, eaque ipsa quae ab illo inventore veritatis et quasi architecto beatae vitae dicta sunt explicabo. Nemo enim ipsam voluptatem quia voluptas sit aspernatur aut odit aut fugit, sed quia consequuntur magni dolores eos qui ratione voluptatem sequi nesciunt. Neque porro quisquam est, qui dolorem ipsum quia dolor sit amet, consectetur, adipisci velit, sed quia non numquam eius modi tempora incidunt ut labore et dolore magnam aliquam quaerat voluptatem. Ut enim ad minima veniam, quis nostrum exercitationem ullam corporis suscipit laboriosam, nisi ut aliquid ex ea commodi consequatur? Quis autem vel eum iure reprehenderit qui in ea voluptate velit esse quam nihil molestiae consequatur, vel illum qui dolorem eum fugiat quo voluptas nulla pariatur?.

A Song of Three Harbors

I make a song of three harbors, three harbors that look to the west, ·
Out to the dim, far places, to the lands old gods have blessed.
One feels the breath of arctic seas and one of desert sands;
And one flings wide its golden gate to the craft of a hundred lands.

The winds that blow from these harbors :finish a mighty span,
Blowing the far-led . race of .men back where the trail began.
And the ships that sail from these harbors, like links of a chain unrolled,
Carry the newest of all things new to the oldest of all things old.

Westward the course of nations, westward the march of power,
From the :first pale dawn of history to the new prophetic hour,
From the first man-slave begotten to the last mangod who dies, ·
'they have seen the hue of promise in the light of westeni skies.

Men look to the east for the · dawn: of things, to the west for things that are
done;
But where shall we look, my brothers, when east arid west are one?
When we've reached the end of the western trail and the goal of a myriad
feet,
And how shall we read the meaning when the circle is made complete?

The Bee Ranch

Over the hills to Tropic
In the light of glowing skies,
And well I know where the canyon ends
And there the mountains rise.
The beckoning road leads on and out
Out to the canyon's rim,
Deep inlaid like a cup of jade,
With morning's gold abrim.

Over the hills to Tropic,
And Elspeth waits me there,
With eyes as blue as the wild buckthorn
And the sunlight caught in her hair.
Bees adrift on a sea of bloom
Gather their sweets for her,
And the orchard ways are a rainbow maze
And a sheen of gossamer.

Over the hills to Tropic
And the world left many a mile.
Only the tender blue of her eyes,
The shy, glad grace of her smile.
Only the sunlit, scented hours,
The murmurous hum of the bees,
The broken speech of each to each,
And the blossoming almond trees.

The New House and The Old

A fine new house is very grand with smoothly polished floors,
Fresh paint with never a finger mark and shining walls and doors.
'rhe prim complacent windows arrayed in wellstarched frills ·
Offers a decorous welcome across their spotless sills.

But I love most an old house mellowed by sun and rain;
I love to take an old house and make it live again.
To mend the roof and patch the walls and clean the chimney place.
And smooth the stains and wrinkles from its kind old-fashioned face.

It seems to be so grateful. for every loving touch,
As one too long neglected. whose heart has suffered much. ·
Refreshed again and strengthened, it learns to laugh and glow.
Forgetting in this sweet new life its long neglect and woe.

A fine new house is grand indeed, but sweeter far to me
To build new fires on old hearth stones and set their memories free;
To learn the wonder and the hope of those who laid them first,
And all the rich experience, the hours that blest or curst.

Beneath that roof, before that fire, my · spirit is aware
Of kinship with all others who joyed or sorrowed there. ·
And close around our common hearth the haunted silence clings ·
Bearing me soft unuttered speech of deep, eternal things.

The Widow Barker Votes

A score of us were lounging at the polls
 When she came there.
 Down at Chris Heywood's barn the polling place
 And all the air
Heavy with smoke and talk, the usual din,
When the door opened and they brought her in.
No man of us but knew her, on the street
 We passed her every day
 In customary dress of decent black
And hair of faded gray
 Jed Barker's widow, poor enough to see—
What could the suffrage mean to such as she?

 But she came toward us with determined tread
 And proudly lifted head,
 And in her face a hush as she were bent
 Upon some holy sacrament.
We stared-almost forgot to smoke or talk.
There was a grandeur in her look, her walk.
 It stirred dim memories of old pioneers
 Of stalwart Molly Pitcher and the years
 Of Valley Forge and the Republic's making.
 Strange sudden memories to come breaking
 Upon our comfortable way
Or managing election day.
As we had always done.
The polls seemed such an odd place to remember
 Washington
 And the frozen horror of that far December.

 “What is your party?” So we questioned her
 Putting the ballot in her outstretched hand.
 “No party. Just the best man for the place.
 We women want the best, you understand.”
 We looked each other, doubtful, in the face
 As those who hear

Footsteps of some pale portent drawing near,
Though still remote.
Silent, we watched the Widow Barker vote.

Pastels

I.

Alice and Muriel
Down a dim and woodland way,
Azure and bloom of rose
Bonneted in silken gray.
White arms wound circlewise,
Mist of dreams in wide young eyes.

II.

White-starred and dim is the magnolia tree
Where purple shadows are at close of day,
And friends have come to share the gracious hour.
In rainbow hues they rest upon the lawn,
A shining pool of quiet comradeship
Stirred by ripples of laughter and of talk.

Thoughts like opening flowers, .
Deep-hearted flowers of crimson or of white,
Float to the surface of the quiet pool
And blossom into beauty.

The jeweled stars come tiptoe · up the sky,
Twilight stands on the hill-tops, and the day
Fulfils itself with heart-remembered grace.

Home Products Day

Horns, blare of trumpets and the big, bass drum.
“Home Products Day” says one and claps my shoulder,
“That’s the procession coming—and the floats.
We’ll teach you much before the day is older
For every product of the town is there
And of the country round, a famous showing
Farm, dairy, orchard—we may well be proud,
No finer crops on record to my knowing.
Then the store windows, full of shine and color
And hung with streamers—there’s a brave array
Most of it made right here—a hustling centre,
We challenge all on our “Home Products Day.”

But I was looking at a carriage full,
A man of strong, bronzed face, a smiling woman,
Children with yellow heads and round blue eyes.
Here were home products rosy, warm and human.

“That keen eyed man,” the garrulous voice went on.
“Who’s riding with the mayor at the rear—
“See him, that fine silk-hatted gentleman?
We sent him on to Washington last year.
He put a bill through not so long ago.
‘We’ve a great town,’ he tells them, and they know it.
So clever spoken—he’s our product, too.
The people like him and they’re going to show it!”

But I was looking at that other face
Chiseled to glowing bronze by healthy labor,
The glance that met his fellows unafraid,
The willing smile that hailed him a good neighbor.
Product and master of the soil was he,
No politician, just a man set free.

