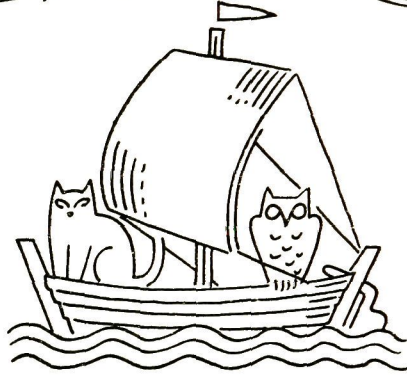


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**SWEETHEART MINE**

Sydney : WEBSDALE, SHOOSMITH and Co., Printers.

SWEETHEART MINE : LYRICS OF  
LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP BY  
J. LE GAY BRERETON.

WHOSE MAY THIS BOOK BE, DARLING, IF NOT THINE,  
SINCE ALL ITS BETTER SONGS ARE SUNG OF THEE?  
BENDING BEFORE THEE, AS BEFORE A SHRINE  
A WIND-BLOWN SAILOR RESCUED FROM THE SEA  
FOR HIS ESCAPE MAKES OFFERING READILY,  
TO THEE I GIVE THESE TOKENS, SWEETHEART MINE.

SYDNEY  
ANGUS AND ROBERTSON  
1897

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## CARNIVAL

*My red-written rimes I will carelessly fling to you ;  
                   Take them or leave.*

*What though you turn from the blossoms I bring  
                   to you,*

*Why should I grieve ?*

*Nay, if you flee at them, they are not meant for  
                   you.*

*Little care I ;*

*Life's breath and heart's blood shall never be spent  
                   for you,*

*Never a sigh.*

*Laugh and pass by, and may happiness go with  
                   you,*

*Light, and good cheer :*

*Never go doubt or the demon of woe with you,  
Malice or fear.*

*But if there be in the midst of the throng with  
you*

*One who hath known—*

*Laugh and pass, brother, but carry my song with  
you ;*

*It is your own.*

## SWEETHEART MINE

## I

## RIPENING DAYS

I love you, love you, love you. And the word  
     Will be no longer held, for day by day  
 It tears me like some royal mountain bird  
     Rending, with rage that ceases not nor flags,  
     The cage that keeps him from his kindred  
         crag;

At last through sunlit air unchecked he wings  
     his way.

Shall one beside a spring run mad for thirst !  
     My patience, like a dandelion ball,  
 Before Love's breath is broken and dispersed.

If I should speak your name, the sound would  
swell

And palpitate like music from a bell  
Exultantly, and bring fresh joy to each and all.

New light seems shed wherever I may go,  
And friendly hands are ever stretched for  
mine.

My world is watered by Love's overflow,  
That rots the germ of every evil weed,  
But quickens into birth each God-sown seed  
And bids its perfect blossom rise and see and  
shine.

The red-lipped laughing Spring is with us now,  
And all the bush puts on a ruddy hue,  
As I have seen you flush from neck to brow  
When speech of mine or silence more than  
speech  
Hath hinted plainly at the thought of each,  
And like a wind-pressed oak my soul leans forth  
to you.

How often have I stretched myself along  
 The earth, and sunk my face amid the green  
 Where wind and insects made a choral song!  
 How often have I whispered as I lay:  
 "I love her," and no other word could say  
 To ease my heart! And all the chorus sang  
 between.

I love you. Speak to me while Spring is here,  
 For now each day is dearer than the last,  
 And hath such robes to deck the joyous year  
 That fairer still she grows and goodlier  
 Than when wan Winter fell in love with her.  
 Speak, speak and justify, at length, the brighten-  
 ing past.

## II

## LIFE MUSIC

Dear, is the world made better for your sake  
And for the sake of love between us two ?  
The morning messengers of joy awake  
And bring their gifts, and freely pour them  
out.

The earth is greener now, without a doubt,  
For your sweet love ; the sky takes on a deeper  
blue.

I woke at sunrise when the air was filled  
With music kindled by the tender day  
Within the breasts of birds that sang and trilled  
And whistled, and I heard one echo float,  
Tossed as on ripples by each jubilant note,  
And so your name in song was wafted where I  
lay.

The Jacky-Winter, russet-clad, elate  
 With Nature's transformation, sat apart  
 And chirped the two soft syllables to his mate,  
 Who far across the paddock answered him.  
 Before I woke, life quickened in each limb  
 Because their song was one with beating of my  
 heart.

The spine-billed Honey-bird of liquid strain  
 Had heard of you. The Swallows here before  
 My window shrilled and twittered, but in vain  
 Strove to give worthy praise to her whose life  
 Made pale day lighten. Oh, my love—my  
 wife!—  
 Well-known yet strangely new to me was all  
 their lore.

These were the heralds of the pomp of joy.  
 Morn, noon and night a gorgeous pageant  
 went  
 With fluent music such as lifted Troy,

Beneath which flowed a constant undertone  
Of solemn peacefulness which held its own  
For ever through the change of varied merriment.

Love is not blind ; for earth would surely be  
A wilderness with grey bleak sky above,  
Hopeless, did Love not give us eyes to see  
The mystic story graven on day and night.  
But even the groping blind are given sight  
If they will consecrate and give their life to Love.



## III

## AT THE PIANO

Close by the gate I crouch against the fence  
Where I am merged in shadow, for the pine  
Stretches between me and the sky a dense  
But tattered canopy. I watch for her  
And listen like an earnest worshipper  
Creeping alone by night to some forbidden shrine.

The fitful wind among the tossing boughs  
Rushes and sighs and passes with a moan  
Of inarticulate passion which allows  
No rest to the longing spirit. From the rout  
Of flying clouds the moon keeps peering out.  
This way and that the misty garden-flowers are  
blown.

One window gleams with yellow light, whereon  
Shadows of swaying draperies appear,  
And once a human shadow, which was gone  
As soon as seen, passed over it. Then low  
And loud by turns I heard glad music grow,  
As through the restless wind it reached my  
straining ear.

Now that the pine is hushed for some brief space,  
After a break the music comes anew  
With rollicking youthful fervour, in the pace  
Of boys let loose to sunshine from the gloom  
Of droning lessons in a bare dull room;  
And every run of notes is a spoken thought of  
you.

That and that only keeps me waiting still;  
Far other music else would guide my feet  
Where I might hear the Curlew on the hill,

The Mopoke in the gully, and the fall  
Of water, and the Wag-tail's chattering call—  
Are not these wilding notes more delicately  
sweet?

The unmeditated melody is best  
And puts to shame such wooden tunes as these,  
But yet a tremulous chord within my breast  
Echoes and glorifies each note with sounds  
That circle outward to my spirit's bounds,  
Because I know your touch upon the vibrant keys.

## IV

## CLOUD SHADOW

How came the cloud between us, darling one?

    You shrank, and day with dusk was overcast  
Till all was drear dull grey beneath the sun.

    I forced my heart to patience, knowing yet  
    You loved me, hoping still that you would let  
Some winged word fly to me before the day was  
    past.

The heavy-mooded morning grew to noon,

    But in the awful silence of my soul  
No word of yours woke echoes. Out of tune  
    With Summer's psalm of life, my pulses beat  
    In drawn monotony. How slowly, sweet,  
The clock deliberate called the hours' unending  
    roll,

I took no joy in sunlight or in shade.

I grew impatient of the wind's caress.

The stiff bush-flowers might bud or blaze or fade

For aught I cared to see their yellow and red.

Almost I failed to care lest I should tread

On forms of life that held no balm for my distress.

I dashed a pebble in the creek. Before

The rippled circles on the muddy plain

Had widened to the rushes of the shore,

I turned and clambered upwards, choosing still

The roughest ledges of the shaggy hill;

Then hastily retraced my aimless steps again.

Thus back and forth I fled till evening came :

And then half-hopeful made my homeward way

When all the western sky was flaked with flame,

And looked to find some message. None !

and so

My poor hope faded with the fading glow,  
And lay at length entombed within the grave of  
day.

An hour past sunset, when the luminous sky  
Was shot throughout with stars from east to  
west,  
Came tidings. Happiest man on earth was I  
When, having scanned before the bearer's face  
Your note, I turned into the dark a space  
And kissed the paper, love, whereon your hand  
had pressed.

## THE LIMITS OF LOVE

I stood in the shadow before you, and felt I was  
brother of grass-blades and waters and sun  
And the gods of the world who adore you and  
serve you, and will till the love everlasting  
be done,

And I felt that their life was in mine, that my  
love and their love were as one.

A vision of Truth to embolden the weakest, you  
leaned from the wall, and I worshipped  
you there.

The light of the sunset made golden the glory  
surrounding your head of your nimbus of  
hair;

And I knew that no joy was too great for the  
reverent spirit to bear.

You leaned from the wall and you gave me your  
hand, ere a word of your mouth had been  
spoken, to kiss,

And the waters of Life I felt lave me and lift  
me and fill me with knowledge of all,  
which is this—

That into one soul there may rush God's infinite  
ocean of bliss.



## AT THE GATE

I loitered idly at the gate,  
 And thoughts of Life within me glowed :  
 A funeral in sombre state  
 Had plodded up the dusty road.

A girl, they said—a sudden fall—  
 Next week she would have been a wife—  
 A slipping stone—and that was all.  
 O, mystery of Love in Life !

My darling passed, reviving day  
 When copper flakes to westward shone ;  
 I raised my cap, she glanced my way  
 And flashed a smile, and she was gone.

Then night sprang up, and, pale of face,  
 Day peered between dark prison bars.  
 I see throughout eternal space  
 The living joy of glowing stars.

## SYMBOLS

All things cry out in witness of the Thought  
     Which shaped them of itself, and gave to them  
     Life, and was author of seed and root and stem  
 In the Beginning. And the voice which taught  
 The one eternal truth of Love is caught  
     And echoed by each grain of dust or gem  
     Which lies unseen or shines in diadem,  
 As by the hills with fire and water wrought.  
  
 And you, my darling, by your presence bring  
     God's message to my heart, and for a space  
     With joy the Absolute I realise.  
 You speak—I hear the chorus angels sing ;  
     I see God's Beauty in your form and face,  
     And love God's Love reflected in your eyes.

## INACTION

For me she bore it, and I could not stay  
     The blow, for well I knew that had I tried  
     In aught to save her, even had she cried  
 To me, her grief had been the more to-day.  
 For me she bore it. What then shall I say  
     For thanks, she knowing well I would have  
         died  
     For her sweet sake? No call to wander wide  
 Like some old knight a ravening beast to slay.

Action is still denied me. God be praised,  
     Prometheus-like I yet may stand elate  
     Letting the months, like those foul birds that  
         ate  
 The Titan's vitals, gnaw the heart she raised  
 To heroism. Though hell about me blazed,  
     It would but glorify me while I wait,

## THE POISE OF PASSION

Sunset and Love ! And latent in the air  
And ready to dash over everything,  
Tossing with gladness of unruly spring,  
Force, passion, knowing naught it may not dare !  
The soft light shines about her everywhere  
In strenuous aching silence, crimsoning  
Her white robes where against her sides they  
cling,  
And glowing in the glory of her hair.

Her hot love-tingling hands are caught in mine ;  
From heaving breast her breath, as though in  
fear,  
Starts from her parted lips ; but in her dear  
Brown eyes I see myself transfigured shine.  
Here is my heaven. I accept the sign.  
Day wanes in all the countryside but here.

## TOWARDS EVENING

The leisurely and leaden-footed Day  
 Now passes westward ; and I watch him go,  
 And bite my lip, and curse his slouching slow  
 Deliberate pace, and urge him on his way,  
 Whereat in this last hour he seems to stay  
 His steps upon the western hill, and so  
 Turns, and looks back across the slope below,  
 And smiles at my impatience of delay.

Begone, thou laggard ! Nay, there is no hate  
 Between us, but I would that Night were come.  
 Hence, for thy long-drawn jest grows wearisome !

Yet for an hour—a long, long hour—I wait :  
 And then the meeting by the garden gate  
 And eyes whereby my love is stricken dumb !

## NIGHTFALL

Why must you leave me at the close of day,  
When all the heat of twelve long hours is pent  
Here in my thudding heart? What day hath  
spent

Of light and life and love is stored away  
Within the coffer of my soul; and may  
Your hand not turn the key, since God hath  
sent

You as His angel? Know you what He meant?  
My place is with you, darling. Let me stay.

Alone—how long?—while day through other  
lands

Makes progress till our east again is grey,  
In dreams I hear the secret words you say,  
With throbbing temples and with trembling  
hands.

I know your will is not with your commands.

Your dreams with mine are mated, Let me  
stay.

## SILENCE

Why should my tongue let drop the faltering  
phrase

Which every lover stales, or seek for new  
Exotic babblings? Wherefore should I strew  
Your way with blossoms which a breath decays  
From him who gathers them? No poet's praise  
Is dower fit for Love. No flower that grew  
By Helicon were proper gift for you  
Who give due worth to all my nights and days.

Silence, through which the soul may wing its  
flight

With restful sweep unceasingly, alone  
Expresses the deep wonder which the tone  
Of your assent revealed; nor this aright  
Can figure forth the shoreless calm delight  
In which I float with you—with you, my own,

O, the wind blows over the sea  
For the love of a warmer land,  
And the billows run eagerly  
To leap to the glittering strand,  
And the world is glad  
Of the life it has had  
And hastens at Love's command.

But keener than light-foot breeze,  
And deeper by far than the sea,  
And warmer than lands of ease  
Where the hours droop dreamily  
With their pinions furled,  
And as wide as the world  
Is the love that I bear to thee.



## BEFORE SUNDOWN

The splendour of the sinking sun  
Is glinting now athwart the rain,  
As though your eyes, my dearest one,  
Were shining through the tears of pain—  
When, heart of gold, shall I behold  
Those darling eyes of yours again ?

The sky above is heavy grey  
With tinge of yellow from the west ;  
The weary sadness of the day  
Is mirrored in my lonely breast.  
My Marjorie, be good to me—  
I'm tired of wandering—give me rest !

## LOST

Where English elm-trees flanked the road  
And made the footway shady,  
With eyes down-cast there fluttered past  
A dainty little lady.

Her cheeks were like the crimson flush  
That dawning day discloses,  
Her soft brown hair was wondrous fair,  
Her lips were red as roses.

I turned and watched her, as she went,  
A dozen times, or over.  
'If only she would smile on me,  
I'd think myself in clover.'

And by the swerving of the road

She stopped, and looked behind her,  
And waved adieu, and flashed from view.

I swore that I would find her.

I hurried back, and searched afar

Through sunny ways and shady,  
But never caught the game I sought,  
The dainty little lady.

## TOBACCO AND FRIENDSHIP

I light my pipe, a friend whose charm  
Has often raised a shape before ;  
The blue cloud wavers in alarm  
And streams toward the open door.

Three clouds are blown, the word is said,  
The smoke curves out to light and air,  
And you beside the rumped bed  
Are seated in the cosy chair.

The mustering shadows quietly  
Foregather in the curtained nooks ;  
And gleaming through the dusk I see  
The golden titles of the books.

Dear shape of one in whom I trust,  
What matter though you never knew?  
I have no selfish wish to thrust  
The burden of my love on you.

The pictures show upon the wall,  
Uncertain squares of deeper grey,  
As darkness slowly draws the pall  
Across the coffin of the day.

And so we sit here face to face,  
Though you are far away to-night  
And little think how this dull place  
Is haunted in the failing light.

But yet another spell I'll try,—  
I wave my pipe with magic art.  
Whatever greater power be nigh,  
May I find shelter in your heart.

Let vague remembrance of me creep  
    Within your thoughts, dear friend of mine,  
Like purple gloom entangled deep  
    Amid the branches of the pine.

I mutter Latin, pause, and see  
    An empty chair beside the bed ;  
Enough black art to-night for me—  
    My pipe is out, the charm is fled.

## COMITATUS

There's a lurid storm-cloud scowling in the past ;  
 And the future bears a gloomy load of rain,  
 Where the thunder-piles in sullen force are  
                   massed

On the leaden-hued horizon of the main ;  
 But I care not though I bore the brand of  
                   Cain,  
 Though I felt the curse of murder crushing  
                   down ;

Even then my best of blessings would remain,  
 For I'm loved by all the children of the town.

In my teeth my many failings you may cast,  
 You may say I'm neither virtuous nor sane,  
 You may tell me I am falling very fast  
     To the dungeon of the adamantine chain :  
 But I laugh, and laugh, and laugh, and laugh  
                   again,

As deeper still and deeper droops your frown ;  
 There's an outlet open still—a narrow lane—  
 For I'm loved by all the children of the town.

In the furnace of the summer's cruel blast,  
    When the very trees are writhing in their  
        pain,  
And the plain forgets that ever it was grassed,  
    And the slimy creatures die in every drain;  
    When the season lays its hand on heart and  
        brain,  
When it slays alike the rich man and the clown,  
    There's a joy in me that never can be slain,  
For I'm loved by all the children of the town.

There are many things that go against the grain,  
    But the green leaf looks the better by the  
        brown;  
And of all my light and darkness I am fain,  
    For I'm loved by all the children of the town.

*Jan., 1896.*



## IN CAMP

My floor the turfy ground, the open sky  
Well-wrought with stars the ceiling of my  
room,

My walls the trees receding into gloom,  
Beside my resinous-scented fire I lie.  
Below, the creek is pattering merrily ;  
The air is heavy with a thick perfume  
Of ghostly native-jasmine full of bloom,  
And down the gully sounds the mopoke's cry.

My soul is on the breast of night. I fly  
Motionless, tossed by neither space nor time,  
Sustained by knowledge of a Truth sublime.  
I realise the infinite Love. Can I,  
Knowing the Life that is my being, die,  
An automatic complex daub of slime ?

*I gave you, darling, all I had,  
Yet found I had no whit the less,  
Although my husk of bounty clad  
An inner shell of selfishness.*

*My Daemon spake, for well he knew  
No selfishness had part in me ;  
All thought save Love I straightway threw  
Aside, and set my spirit free.*

*Who knows what fields his thought has won  
Before his maiden sword he fleshes ?  
I cast the net of Love for one  
And caught a world within its meshes.*

*By the Same Author*

THE SONG OF BROTHERHOOD, AND OTHER  
VERSES

PERDITA: A SONNET RECORD

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Sweetheart mine : lyrics of love  
and friendship

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