

THE GIFT

a tribute to Loetitia Williamson at ninety

*Did he then see a star rise from the frozen mud
Of Flanders plain, and in youth-lost compassion
For those slain, dream him a needed hero, nation's giant,
From one grotesquely strutting, staccato little man?
If shadeless loyalty held his vision fast
To Judas causes which betrayed his trust,
How now should we, with after-wisdom judge?
Do not we too hatch phoenix phantoms in the mind
From childhood fears, engendered by uncertainty
Of who and what we need to be?*

*If we who know him only in his work,
And find the sun-power of compassion there,
To light the ancient fears of man, and link
A love of all that's living into chains
Of praise for star-born things;
If we find faults, and oh, we do
Uncomfortably, for they are ours,
Reflected in sun-splintered honesty;
How more than ours, how sharp the pains
Of one who, selfless, shared the man himself?*

*She once was Mary, with the robin at her breast,
Patient for Willie in her wilderness of love;
And Lucy, silent at the otter's sneeze, to give
Life's chance to wild, untrammelled thing;
Hers was no easy gift, in motherhood, to be herself
The ideal found, denied then by the battle in his mind
That was the seeker's need to be forever restless.
What strength we have, who claim his real honour now,
Is held in trust, from her calm dignity of love;
His Gypsy giving still, has gifted us her family, our friends.*

BRYAN WAKE, Oct. '90



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