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# QUARTERLY

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Volume IX

Number 1

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December

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COLLEGE







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Students and Alumnae are urged to contribute. All articles should be addressed to the Editor of the Connecticut College Quarterly, Connecticut College, New London, Connecticut. Terms: \$.40 a year; \$.10 the copy.







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## TWO SONNETS

## JOSEPH TO MARY

I have been fearful waking in the night  
 To touch you whom a god has touched, afraid  
 Lest you be stranger to my hand or made  
 Of such intangibility as might  
 Evade my fingers, my too human sight,  
 And leave me clutching emptiness, dismayed,  
 Incredibly alone, who have assayed  
 To love too great a one and without right.

If I should wake you with my nightmare cry,  
 Be not alarmed but give your hand to me,  
 Speak of the child and whisper soft that I  
 Will wake my son; say if you can, Mary,  
 That prophets babble and that wise men lie;  
 Say that we found our own divinity.

## MARY TO JOSEPH

Do you remember my first mild dismay  
 When strangers thronged about me and the child  
 With agony still in me and the wild  
 New surge of joy—then rustlings in the hay  
 And curious eyes discovered me where I lay  
 Nursing my precious young? Silent they filed  
 Along cob-webbed stalls, and no one smiled  
 But only stared and found no word to say.

Then three old grey-beards brought sweet-smelling stuff  
 In jewelled boxes for the New-born King.  
 "No king," I said and smiled, "It is enough  
 That he is mine." But they: "Nay he is everything:  
 The Son of God, the Flower of all flowers—"  
 I let them prate of God, Joseph, but the child is ours.

MARY Q. HESS '31



**THESE ITALIANS**

(Suggested by a newspaper item)

**G**UISEPPE FIOCCO, forty years old, with hair a little grey at the temples, and eyes a little bloodshot from long nights of thinking, straightened up from the giant whirring machine in the wire factory. The rumble, the silver revolutions filled his head until he could not think very clearly, but back of the whirring was the growth of an idea—not a new idea, but one that he had never recognized before. His hand groped for a lever, and the machine stopped. Just like that, he thought, the machine stopped. A noise—and then a silence, in the middle of other noises. He stood very still.

“What’s the matter there, fella?” shouted the man at the next machine—he was a little Slav with wide cheek bones—“McCarty—he has an eye on you.”

Guiseppe Fiocco turned and looked at him. He looked him up and down with eyes that saw nothing at all. “I tell you,” the little Slav said to them all the next day, hunched over their lunch boxes, “I never saw eyes like that before—like a fire lighted very hot.” Guiseppe picked up his handkerchief from the floor where he had dropped it, a clean, red handkerchief, and folded it in four squares, very evenly, so that the edges met.

“I have a good idea,” he said to the staring Slav. “I hate McCarty. I hate you, too.” His voice rose to a hoarse shout that the machines closed in on and deadened. “I hate everybody!” Then Guiseppe Fiocco walked out of the whirring and put on his hat and coat. He went very quietly down the stairs and out of the gate. He went to his room and closed the door, and cut his throat.

“These Italians!” they all said the next morning—at breakfast—on the subways. “Nice gratitude he shows the governor for pardoning him. Nice way he treats the man who gave him back a job, and him a criminal. Say, I wouldn’t trust one of them wops around the block! Always a knife handy.”

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Guiseppe Fiocco was proud of himself. It showed in the lift of his head, the soft glow in his eyes. Here he was, only twenty years old, and in America, only eight months with this fine job in this big, clean factory. What a factory, with the thunder and rolling of black and silver wheels, and the shrieking whistles that sounded at noon, and the hurry and shouting that got into his blood, and made him want to shout, too, and sing, and work very fast. There was nothing in Italy like this factory, nothing in his warm, bright Italian town like this machine that he tended lovingly, gaily, a thunderous thing of churning wheels and pistons, a big machine, clumsy as machines were when Guiseppe Fiocco was twenty years old. Its noise put a



fierce urge in him to hurry, to make a great lot of wire, more wire than any one else in the factory, great coils of shining wire lying piled in the yard. Oh, he would be a very great wire maker, this Guiseppe Fiocco, a very rich man in this rich America. He would have a house with a stained glass window in it, and many figures cut around the porch railing, and the prickliest sofa ever made, and china with birds and flowers painted on it like his sister-in-law's, but his birds would be yellow, not red—yellow like the little singing ones that flew around the eaves of his mother's house at home. He would get a wife, that Mafalda, perhaps, that Tony liked to tease him about,—she had eyes that made one feel happy,—and they would have children, many children, to grow up and call their father the great wire-maker. He thought of these and many glad, hurrying things while he worked, eager to earn a great deal of money. He sang as he pushed the lever, and watched the thin filings drop into the big container until it was full. He even smiled with a flash of teeth while he carried the container across the room and dumped the filings into a bigger can. He hurried very fast on his trips to the can and back, because every minute away from his machine meant less work done, less money, but he smiled. They grunted at him, the other workmen, with dust settled thick in the heavy lines of their faces. "That crazy wop!" they grumbled. "He must be cracked. What's he got to sing for, dumpin' filings. While he loses good money, he grins. What a fool!"

And then trouble came, swiftly, without warning, as trouble often comes—a queer kind of trouble. Such a little thing began it—the little silver filings of the big Armenian at the next machine. He had furtive eyes, and thick hands, and they called him Fritz, because he had a long, thick name that no one could pronounce—least of all, Guiseppe, who could not even speak good English. He was a bully, but Guiseppe had never known he was a sneak until the riotously sunny morning when he saw him throwing his filings into his—Guiseppe's—can. A pretty thing to be doing! Making extra trips to the big container for Guiseppe—cheating him out of money—making more money for himself. A dirty trick! He would speak to him for that. He did speak to him, hotly, in an incoherent confusion of Italian and very new American. His eyes flashed indignantly. "I do my own work, see? Not yours, see?) You keep out!" But the big Armenian only looked at him, and laughed a little, and blew his nose on a grimy handkerchief.

"Shut up, you wop," he said, and threw another handful of filings into Guiseppe's pail. A tremulous, poignant wrath swept through Guiseppe. He felt his youth insulted, his success threatened in that insolent gesture. He shook so that it frightened him.

"Stop that, or I tell the boss!" he screamed. "Dump in your own pail!" The Armenian laughed again, and went on working. Almost stumbling in his rage, Guiseppe went to find the foreman.



"It is that Fritz!" he stormed, his young, very soft eyes blazing. "He dumps in my pail. Every time he dumps in my pail! And he laughs! he laughs!"

The foreman did not laugh. He liked Guiseppe—the tilt of his head, the flare of his nostril, his gay Italian song. He watched the filings instead, the dusty silver filings, and he fired the Armenian the next morning. Big Fritz did not go calmly. He had a wife and children and very little money. He was a bully and a sneak. "I'll get that wop!" he bellowed, when the foreman told him. "I'll choke him for that story! He'll get his!" Such a little thing, filings, to start so much trouble in Guiseppe's gay, simple life.

That noon when he turned down his street, a little thoughtful, swinging along in his overalls, with his head bare, Big Fritz was waiting on the corner—Big Fritz and another bulky man with a heavy mustache. They grabbed Guiseppe before he had hardly seen them, and hit him with a club and knocked him down. Big Fritz laughed at him as he lay aching horribly on the pavement, with a crowd of factory hands gathering around. "And that's not all that's coming to you," he said. "There's lots more for babies like you." Someone hit Guiseppe with a stale sandwich.

It was bewildering and frightening, and very terrible. The dreams of the big wire-maker lost reality under the stress of the new worry. A blow with a club is a painful thing, not easily passed off. Guiseppe was lithe and strong, but he was alone and he did not carry clubs. Before he left his brother's house that noon he slipped a knife into his pocket and patted it once or twice for reassurance. He did not use knives, but there was comfort in feeling it there.

On his way back to work there was comfort in feeling it snug beside him when he saw three slouching figures waiting near the park that he crossed to the factory. A sick terror settled over him. He would have turned and run the other way, but he was no coward, only very young, and unused to fighting. Perhaps they only meant to frighten him, sneer at him as he walked by. He kept his head erect as he passed, but his full Latin mouth twitched nervously, and then he saw that Fritz still carried his club. He saw too late. It hit him on his shoulder, so hard that he heard it crack. He gave a little moan and started to run. Could this be he, Guiseppe Fiocco, of slow Italian towns and sunshine, running through a strange park with three men behind him. So hopeless, this running—panting—with them always close behind. Suddenly they closed in upon him. Three squat faces close to his. Big Fritz with his club raised. Shuddering, pale, he snatched at his knife, and slashed. Panic-stricken, he slashed, never meaning to kill anyone. Never meaning to kill that big Armenian, lying sodden and limp on the grass, with a gash across his dirty neck. But juries only shake their heads when you cannot speak very good American, when you cannot understand



what it is all about. They gave Guiseppe Fiocco a life sentence. He was twenty years old.

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Governors are kind on Christmas Day. Sometimes they pardon prisoners who have been very good. One Christmas Day a governor pardoned Guiseppe Fiocco. He was forty years old. Twenty years is a long time to live in prison. It gives you a great many hours to think, and sometimes that is very bad. It is nice to think when you are twenty, with a good job, and when there are gay, happy things ahead of you. You make pretty dreams, brave plans about wire-making and china dishes. Thoughts are not so cheerful when you are in prison forever. Of course, there is still work. Guiseppe kept his trade. There are amusements. Clara Bow rolls her eyes behind bars as well as anywhere. There are books. Behind bars, Guiseppe learned to speak very good English. But there are long hours at night when you are first shut up, when you lie and stare at nothing and tighten your fists until they are cut, and cry without tears, and wonder dumbly why life is as it is. You can always know that men in every cell are dumbly wondering the same thing, but they are not all twenty and stunned and a little surprised. You can be a good prisoner, and work very hard, and laugh and joke when there is time for laughing and joking, and no one will ever know that inside you are bitter and hateful. No one will know that you are lonely, and empty at the thought of twenty dead years lying behind you—that you are groping for an idea—for an awful meaning. And they call you a good prisoner. A governor pardons you. A beneficent boss gives you back your job in the wire factory.

So Guiseppe Fiocco smiled a wide Italian smile when he thanked the governor. "I can never thank you enough, sir," he said, and inside a dull sullenness gnawed, a grey ache. Nothing left. "It is very kind of you. I don't deserve such kindness," he told the boss, dreading the new blankness, the brightness, hating the thunder of machinery. Guiseppe Fiocco, a middle-aged man working in a wire factory. No illusions about the great wire-maker. Turning a handle at a new, well-oiled machine. No cans for the filings—a moving trough sweeping them silently away. No singing gladness. Calm hatred. And a slow idea growing clearer, startlingly clearer.

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Guiseppe Fiocco groped for a lever and his machine stopped. Silence, in the midst of many noises. "I have an idea," he told the staring Slav at the next machine. "I hate McCarty. I hate you. I hate everybody." He walked very quietly out of the whirring, down the stairs and out the gate. He went to his room, and locked the door, and cut his throat. These Italians! Always a knife handy.



## HOMECOMING

MARTIN loved that room. As long as he could remember, back into the time when he was small enough to hide under the tall chairs, he had loved the room. As he stood in the doorway now, unseen by the maid hovering around the table, his eyes lovingly, caressingly regarded the room. The old oak panels reaching up half-way to the high ceiling, the delicate deep green Chinese wall-paper above them, the thick old beams set into the ceiling—he was still thrilled by them. He looked down at the rich Oriental rug covering the entire floor, and he remembered how his grandfather had told him, long ago, of the people who worked years making rugs of this sort, blending the quiet colors into a beautiful whole. And his eyes wandered to the long table which was now being covered with a white linen cloth, and he thought of the countless number of times his family had gathered there, and of the times his grandfather's family had gathered there long before Martin had known the room. The electric lights had not been turned on as yet and the soft, dying light of the sun came in through the four long windows, slanted through the dull green curtains, and was reflected in the glow of the old furniture. The scene reminded Martin of a hundred other times when he had come in from the dark coldness of an autumn twilight, and had stood in the doorway, as he stood now, looking in at the room he loved. Memories stole back to him, memories of many different things. This house that he had grown up in, had left as a boy, and had come back to as a young man—. It seemed so long since he had been home. Why had he not missed these things even more than he had, all these things that were so much a part of him? This room with its delicate aging grace, this house which contained all his memories, this family which had been his very life—how had he ever been able to live without them?

The maid was placing the last pieces of silver on the table. Then the tall green candles were being lighted, and Martin awoke from his day-dreams. He smiled to himself—funny what this old room could do to him. He must go back and join the family. He turned and went into the living-room.

Martin's mother looked up as her son entered. He was the same quiet boy, she thought. College had not changed him as she had secretly hoped it would. Mrs. Stevens loved Martin—of course she loved Martin. He was such a good-looking boy, tall and dark like herself, but with the intensely alive eyes of his father. She was proud to introduce him as her son, and she found pleasure in telling about his high honors received in school. But sometimes Mrs. Stevens wondered about Martin, wondered why he was so reserved and quiet, wondered if all mothers felt so incapable of understanding their sons. And she would feel vaguely uneasy and think Martin was perhaps a little odd, and then she would think of Dot and Jean and console



herself by the knowledge that her daughters were open books to their mother.

"Sit over here, dear, where it's warm. Your father and I were just wondering where you were."

Martin sat down in the low chair by the fire. It seemed a long time since he had sat in this room with his family. He leaned back in his chair, and as he spoke with his parents, his eyes took in the whole quiet scene around him, and he felt very contented. The fire crackled and hissed and threw long, thin shadows over on the walls, and the deep autumn dusk settled over the room, and the quiet voices of his parents scarcely disturbed the silence. The smoke drifting from his father's pipe and the moving shadows on the walls were the only active things. Martin watched his father and mother as they talked—why did he seem so far away from them? They were his parents, the nearest people to him in the world. Why did they seem almost like strangers, trying to carry on a conversation? They listened to him as he told about his college and of his friends there, but he felt that their attention was almost forced, their interest almost absent.

The sudden opening and closing of the front door crashed into the quiet room. Chattering voices were heard in the hall, and then two young girls rushed in, vivid in green and blue, bright from the cold, crisp air.

"Have we been keeping you, Mother? You see, Jack and Ted and Martha and Marion and a lot of others all insisted we stay and we did and we're awfully sorry! Hi, Martin! What have you been doing all afternoon? Come on, Dot, we'd better rush. Be back in a minute—." And they flew out before anyone could say a word.

The atmosphere of the room had changed. Mrs. Stevens and Mr. Stevens were both smiling now, Mrs. Stevens in private satisfaction. These two youngsters were so alive, so intensely eager. She loved young people to be active and interested in everything. Intellectual things could wait. Mrs. Stevens secretly believed that anyone deeply interested in books was consoling himself for not being able to do anything else. Scholars were all right, but they never made any money and were very hard to talk with.

And Martin thought to himself, "This cannot be true. It cannot be that I have been fooling myself right along, that I know these people, these strangers. I knew their every thought, I knew just what they would do and say—. But I lived in a dream. I have been away from my family for three months, and I come back to find strangers, kind and thoughtful, but yet strangers. We cannot find each other. Could we *ever* find each other? It is as if I leaned confidently on a wall above a high cliff and suddenly found the wall to be of paper."

And for the first time in his life, Martin felt very lonely.

MARGARET GLEESON '31



## MAN AND WIFE

CATHERINE ANNE wanted to reach out and touch him to make sure that he was there. In so many vivid dreams she had seen him sitting opposite her in just this position, knees carelessly crossed, one hand behind his head, the other gesturing gracefully. This could be a dream. Perhaps it was; her head didn't feel very clear, and the room had a way of swimming and shifting before her eyes. But his voice was too real for a dream. Oh, that voice of his! Like brown water moving over polished stones.

No one but the man talking to her would have guessed that Catherine Anne wasn't hearing a word. Her eyes never left Tom's face, and at proper intervals she breathed, "Really?" or "How fascinating!" Catherine Anne knew of the charms of a good listener. But she wasn't hearing a word.

Her mind was going around in tortured circles. Little irrelevant, painful things she thought she had forgotten were twisting malevolently in her brain. The time Tom had neglected to take her home from Bertha's party, having fallen for Bertha's out-of-town guest, that pretty Landis girl. The time he had handed her over to Bob Gearhart at the club and gone home alone for no apparent reason whatever. The time—oh, why must she remember these trivial, frequent, long-ago things that had hurt her so! In the space of five minutes she lived over again the five empty years, just finished, when Tom was in South America. Was it worse having him around to ignore her or not having him around at all? Oh, better to be able to look at him—he was so good to look at, this errant husband of hers.

In the subdued afternoon light slanting through the tall windows at his back, his coloring, that would have been bronzed and reddish brown in a strong glare, was softened to pale shades of dusky tan. The lines in his face were invisible in that light, and the grey in his temples, and in that light, his eyes were dark and warm. The old, impatient gestures, the nervous quirk of his mouth she remembered so well, he had left somewhere on another continent. He was all quietness now. She missed these and other idiosyncrasies that had become dear to her in his absence. She couldn't be sure now that they had ever been a part of him. Oh, God, how she had missed that tawny head, gilded under the halo cast by the reading light winter evenings, the impatient click of turning pages, the pungent suffocating smoke of his pipe! How she had missed being awakened by the bang of the front door in the quiet hours of the night, and the ensuing trembling, unsatisfactory assurance that, no matter where he had been, now he was safe at home.

Catherine Anne sat there deaf to his words, but quivering with awareness of his presence, her eyes devouring his beloved face. She struggled to keep her head, to remember to try to be interested and interesting, the per-



fect wife she had not been before he went away. For five years this had been her sole ambition, and for this, the hour of his return, she had lain in wait impatiently, planning every detail over and over. To make this man, this familiar stranger, love her, this she must accomplish.

And now she twisted her fingers and tried to think of something clever, something at least appreciative to say. If only he were such and she were such that she could get up and walk over to him and kiss him on the mouth—not a mere welcoming kiss—to tell him of this hunger. If only she were not stiff and tongue-tied! She had vowed he would not find her like this.

And Tom—he sensed the unreality of the situation, too. After five years, to be back in the old living-room. Not a stick of furniture out of place. Every damned thing the same—that depressing grey lampshade, that mottled ocre rug, and Catherine. With the afternoon light full on her face, she looked a little more tired, a little more washed out. Poor old girl! And that feverish, taut look about the eyes as if burning, relentless fingers were pulling at the flesh just there at the cheekbones. And not hearing a word, by all that's holy! He had forgotten that appalling vacancy of hers, as if her poor, afraid soul had gone off somewhere to a remote safety. If she had been less in awe of him, less self-conscious, less in love with him and more in love with her own personality, things might have been different. God knows she had been handsome enough as a bride. But the vacancy of her, the self-consciousness of her that made her cold.

He went on talking, knowing that she wasn't listening—"and after Berkeley left me, I went back to Lima and went in for intensive research work for the next trip. This was in September, year before last—" September, year before last,—he had known Paula a month then. He hadn't found out about her sense of humor yet, but he knew her beauty by heart and the quickness of her intellect. Lord, those gorgeous days on the coast—Paula, vivid in white—her eyes mocking him, her mouth provocative! If only she were sitting opposite him now he'd walk over and take her hand and tell her how damned delicious she was; and Paula would understand that that meant that she had all of his love. Life would be rather hellish without Paula, with only scientific treatises and Catherine. Tough to feel this way about Catherine. He'd hoped to find her changed, more of a comrade, more of a wife. Lord, he'd talked enough—it was all unheard anyway.

"And that's that. We got into some storms on the way up, but nothing diverting happened. And now I suppose I'd better dress for dinner. Having any people in?"

"Why, no, dear. Not your first night home. I rather thought—." Was it going to be the same old story after all?

"That's right that's fine." He stood up and turned toward the win-



dow, gazing with blind eyes at something she could never see. In the light the lines on his face were visible, and the grey at his temples. And there was a nervous quirk at his mouth.

Catherine was suddenly dizzy with emotion, seeing that nervous twitching at the corner of his mouth. She must show him how glad she was, how much she'd changed. She stumbled across the space between them, and putting her hands on his shoulders, she kissed him. Her eyes were shut, and tears were slipping from under the lids.

Tom remembered that his welcoming kiss had been very perfunctory. Some show of affection should be made, he supposed, but how terrible she was—rather maudlin. Had he ever wanted her less cold? He bent and kissed her, but it was Paula in his arms. Then he slipped from her embrace.

Catherine Anne heard him upstairs moving busily about his room, then the sound of the shower.

She walked over to the window and looked out. Her gaze, too, was blind.

MARY Q. HESS '31

---

Running, I sought to find it,  
 Running against night and time,  
 Hoping to overtake you and bring it back  
 Before it be misunderstood.

But all along the stretch  
 Where I was running,  
 Dark came peeping  
 Beneath hedges,  
 Under eaves of trees,  
 Saying: "You shall not find her.  
 We have hurried her away."

And far ahead  
 I saw night sifting down  
 Like tears

MARY F. SCOTT '32



## A COMMON CAUSE OF "DISCOMBOBULATED FRIENDSHIPS"

ON one side of the quiet, wide river lived a great Graffon, and on the other, a lean Lippon. And all day long, having very little else to do, they sat on their opposite banks nibbling at nimble-berries and wiggling their toes in the water. Once in a while, especially after a particularly satisfactory lunch, they would nod at each other across the river, and smile, and halloo (though, sad as I am to say it, the halloos amounted to very little after they had tripped up and down over every single little ripple in the path across the river). And every night, when the Graffon rolled into bed, he thought foolishly tender thoughts about the lean Lippon; and the lean Lippon, pulling his sweater off over his head, would think: "Good old Graffon!" But they had never been able to talk to each other.

One night a fearful wind thrust the tallest tree in the woods from its moorings, so that it lay across the river. And in the morning, when the great Graffon awoke, he perceived that the lean Lippon, in the greatest excitement, was skipping across to *his* bank! For days after that they wandered up and down the edge of the river together, being the very best of friends. The lean Lippon went home as late as he could every night, without its being too dark for him to see his way along the tree-trunk; and he woke up just exactly when the river did every morning, and came scampering back. And, oh! such a time as they had telling each other all the great Ideas they had evolved during their hundreds of years of sitting-on-the-bank (for, as you know, Graffons never grow old, and Lippons are always young).

Then came the tragic moment. *They ran out of Ideas,—quite completely out!* And it got to be so that the great Graffon would glance at his watch ever so many more times a day than he should have or needed to; and the lean Lippon would suddenly remember, with terrific anxiety, that his wife had wanted him home early to stem strawberries for short-cake. At night, when the Graffon lay in bed, he would think of the Lippon and would wince, and turn over uncomfortably, pulling the covers up close about his ears; and the Lippon, if he happened to think of the Graffon during his getting-undressed time, would shut his teeth closely together, and feel very white and hateful.

He still went across the river every morning; but now he sometimes lay in bed for half an hour after he woke up, and loitered inexcusably over his toast and marmalade. The Graffon, too, might be busily chopping wood when the Lippon strolled up. Both made their "good mornings" cheerful only with much effort. Oh, the tedium of the hours that followed, hours too hot or too cold, and always much too long.



Then came autumn, and a lustrous fire kept the Lippon indoors for increasing lengths of time every day. Winter came and passed. Spring came, and, in the floods, the old tree was carried, rearing and twisting, down the river. And the Graffon and the Lippon went back to their banks; and, especially after a particularly satisfactory lunch, would nod at each other, and smile, and halloo.

O hear me, Graffons and Lippons,—all! When a tree falls across your river, be wary. Be cautious. If you go over as did the lean Lippon, to the other side, you, too, will have a tragedy. You, too, will run out of Ideas, unless you save them and pretend mysteries about them. You, too, will be disappointed and uncomfortable; and you, too, after list upon list of confidences has been laid bare, will be able to say only—"Halloo." *Dear Graffon, dear Lippon*, spare each other by being moderate, and let us all be the greatest of friends!

MARY F. SCOTT '32

---

When I go down  
 I vow that it shall be  
 As a poplar goes down,—  
 Suddenly and bravely in a storm,  
 Its leaves flittering silver  
 And shuddering silver—  
 (But never a shudder in the branches,  
 Only the flitter and shudder of silver leaves,  
 As the poplar goes.)

When I go down  
 I vow that it shall be  
 As a sharp snap  
 And a bitter twist—  
 (But never a shiver in the branches,  
 Only the flitter and shudder of silver leaves.)

MARY F. SCOTT '32







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