

# SONNETS OF THE CROSS

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1942~~



by Thomas S. Jones, Jr.

AS ON A MISSAL PAGE OF LONG AGO<sup>1</sup>



s tales cowed monks illumined long ago  
On margins of a missal rich with flowers,  
Where letters luminous with mystic powers,  
Purple as passion, red as blood-drops glow;  
As miniatures of rose and azure show  
The Seraph City girt with silver towers,  
And lovers crowned with lilies in fair bowers,  
Who dream of peace amid perpetual woe:

So here in amethyst and burning gold  
Upon your mind as on a missal page  
Undimmed by dust or yellowed by Time's breath,  
One cowed with light, invisible, has scrolled  
These legends of a long-forgotten age,  
These lives . . . to tell the Love more strong  
than Death.

<sup>1</sup>An untitled sonnet, hitherto unpublished until June, 1942.



SONNETS OF THE CROSS  
AND OTHER SONNETS

*of*

THOMAS S. JONES, Jr.

*Edited with a Memoir*

*by*

John L. Foley

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CAPAM

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# SONNETS OF THE CROSS

## I

### YNISWITRIN<sup>1</sup>



WIM watered vale whose clear streams  
seek the sea,

At gray of dawn strange gods walked  
in the wood

Before Saint Joseph's wattled chapel stood  
Woven with green wands from some Druid tree;  
The fragrance of a lost simplicity  
Clings to the tomb of the white brotherhood  
That wandered through wild lands, yet found it good  
To linger here apart with Calvary.

The feet of frost have touched you, now you wear  
Autumn's rich ruined splendour and soft haze—  
The memory of immemorial fires;  
But as you dream alone, the sea-winds bear  
A whispered promise from wide starry ways  
Of new songs that shall fill those fallen choirs.

<sup>1</sup>Glastonbury Abbey, site made by Joseph of Arimathea.



## II

### THE FOREST

IN lonely thickets where the wood is deep  
The sickles of thin gold weave to and fro,  
Among the boughs of ghostly mistletoe  
Beneath a night of whispering leaves they reap;  
And with the waning moon the Druids creep  
From knoll and hollow noiseless as the snow,  
Their white bulls pace about the pool and low  
Through mists of magic while walled cities sleep.

But when the wakened forest moves and gleams,  
They vanish at the singing of a bird  
And Ninian leaves his hidden resting-place;  
Still with the wingèd angel of his dreams  
Down empty groves he leads his savage herd,  
The light of dawn on his uplifted face.

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<sup>1</sup>Sain

### III

#### OLD MAGIC<sup>1</sup>

AS light swings wide the mighty Eastern door,  
He comes with crozier and a silver bell  
To bless the green wood where the Druids dwell  
Alone with coloured winds and starry lore;  
They hear his feet along the leafy floor  
And tremble when he nears their wizard-well,  
For shadows of a golden citadel  
No longer veil its deeps with faery ore.

All forest wisdom must give way to him:  
Never at evening will the speckled wren  
Foretell the ages from a dewy thorn,  
Nor gray priests watch until the moon grows dim  
The milk-white hounds slip through a silent glen  
And vanish up the flaming slopes of morn.

<sup>1</sup>Saint Patrick.

## IV

### CROAGH PATRICK

WHILE Patrick kneels upon the lonely height  
The mist dissolves, the sun sends out its beams  
On desolate wild moors, gray mountain streams,  
And wooded hills bleak as a northern night,  
Then down long water verges sinks from sight  
Of mortal shores and that lost land that dreams  
Within the ocean—now the sea-star gleams  
Through parted trees of gold and crimson light.

But still he waits, his head in reverence bowed,  
For birds of God on wings of fire and snow  
Fly singing from the sunset: as he prays  
They fold Croagh Aigli in a living cloud;  
Their triumph song foretells to isles below  
The coming of the Saints, the golden days!



V

THE POOL OF HEALING: IONA

DEW on thyme-sprinkled turf and heatherbell  
And smooth sea spaces stretching lone and gray,  
A quiet hill-top where a deep pool lay  
Like a pale star within a rocky shell;  
And by the windless water of the well  
A woman waited for the dawn's first ray—  
Lulled by the movement of the leaping spray  
She saw a vision of far Israel:

The Mother in the shadowy cattle-byre,  
So meek and patient that good Briget wept,  
Nor heard the gulls, nor watched the brightening sky;  
But from the East there shone a path of fire,  
And Mary bent above her while she slept  
In the clear golden sunrise on Dun-I.

## VI

### CLONARD<sup>1</sup>

THE river meads of vanished Clonard hold  
    Forgotten dreams, white memories pure as dew,  
    Of fragrant days when scholars wandered through  
The marshy grass and hearts had not grown old;  
Beneath her purple hills a saint once told  
    A starry tale, a story strange and new  
    Brought from the dawn-lands—and all Eiré drew  
Around his moat to hear the words of gold.

There stands no cross, or tower, or ancient wall  
    Mellow with simple peace men used to know,  
    And from the fields no courtly town has sprung:  
Only along green banks the blackbirds call,  
    Just as they did a thousand years ago  
    In morning meadows when the world was young.

<sup>1</sup>First Celtic College. Founded by Saint Finnian, C. 500.

## VII

### THE BATTLE OF THE BOOK

BENEATH bronze chariot wheels the torn earth steamed  
A mighty death-mist, Druids called in vain  
Their forest gods, across the battle plain  
The savage stallions of Diarmuid screamed;  
For on Columba's men a brightness streamed  
Keener than whistling sword-flame or fierce rain  
Of whirling brands, and high above the slain  
Invisible with light mailed Michael gleamed.

The armies bowed like grass on windy weirs  
Before the unknown foeman's burning shield,—  
Then from the silence rose hoarse triumph cries;  
And brass walls wavered under rattling spears,  
As wild Tyr-Conall's prince swept down the field  
Led by the lone white warrior of the skies.



## VIII

### SAINT COLUMBA

THE murmuring tide foams slowly up the sands,  
    Behind a veil of gold lost Ireland lies,  
    And with the sunset in his yearning eyes  
Alone on Colum-kill Columba stands;  
He frees the white bird from his tender hands,  
    Beyond a changing violet sea it flies,  
    A streak of mist against the burnished skies  
It vanishes in far green Western lands.

The tides still whisper through the waning light,  
    Wings still find rest along that wave-worn place,  
    But he will climb the cold gray rocks no more;  
And yet ye know that from a fairer height  
    He watches across deeps of star-filled space  
    The well-loved outline of his Irish shore.

## IX

### SAINT ORAN

SAINT ORAN told them while the West grew dim  
About lone islands whither he had gone,  
And how he saw the orchards of the dawn  
Lying beyond the green earth's burnished rim;  
Upon that golden wall walked Cherubim  
Whose shadows were a snow-light on the lawn,  
And ere their gentle wonder was withdrawn  
One pitying held a starry branch toward him.

The cowed monks listened, and at vesper bell  
They left him in a quiet place to dream  
By garden-ways where grasses drift like fleece;  
But when they reached the central ivied cell  
Across the altar moved the crimson gleam  
Of that wild fruit of flame whose taste is peace.

## X

### THE FAREWELL

COLUMBA sat upon an ancient mound  
Watching the gulls fly toward a distant sea,  
Their tameless wings impatient to be free  
Far from the narrow waters of the Sound;  
And as he dreamed alone, an old horse found  
That quiet place beneath the quicken-tree,  
And with his head against his master's knee  
His tears fell slowly on the thymy ground.

The memory of morning's quenchless power,  
Fierce Pictish kings subdued before the Cross,  
Wild heathen countries white-robed monks had  
gained—  
All were forgotten in that parting hour:  
Even the angels vanished from the Ross,  
And only silent human love remained.



## XI

### SAINT BRENDAN<sup>1</sup>

IN simple days before the gods were old  
A bishop left the warring forest bands,  
And on the beach there grew beneath his hands  
A silver coracle with oars of gold;  
It bore him where the sea and sky enfold  
Long dewy marges of the moon-white lands,  
A mist of stars around those dreaming strands  
Lifted a moment that he might behold.

Then swifter than the wind a shaft of fire  
Fled from the quivering bow-strings of his heart,  
To find the ever-hidden entrance there;  
And now in answer to a saint's desire  
The island waits, held by that flaming dart,  
Upon the burnished edges of the air.

<sup>1</sup>Abbot of Clonfert, a navigator, wearied of men's warfare;  
found the Islands of the Blest, 577.

## XII

### THE HEAVENLY FIELD<sup>1</sup>

THE dawn that woke a wild Northumbrian hill  
Shone on a golden youth; the meadow-lea  
Bore grim Cadwallon's flaming host, but he  
Beside a wooden cross was firm and still:  
For holy dreams fed Oswald's heart until  
His eyes looked past the kingdoms toward the sea  
Whence vision came, and he was fain to free  
The savage land of all its ancient ill.

Unlike the Roman lords whose ruined wall  
Frowned on the field, unlike dread ocean kings  
He kept lone vigil with the crimson morn;  
And archangelic rank his battle call  
Against mailed might and fierce dark Pagan things  
From that red height where Chivalry was born.

<sup>1</sup>Near Hexham, England, Oswald, King of Northumbria, raises the Cross in battle against Cadwallon, 634.

### XIII

#### CAEDMON

FROM feast and song the simple cowherd crept:  
    Again the harp had passed him on its way  
    And he was mute—now in the fragrant hay  
Alone with dumb and patient beasts he wept;  
The oxen, ass, and timid sheep all kept  
    Winter's harsh cold from reaching where he lay,  
    Their humid breath rose like an incense gray  
As on the Eve when Christ among them slept.

But ere the stars were folded in rose flame  
    A Voice like a great wind rang clear and high,  
    “Sing, Caedmon, of Creation's radiant birth!”  
And when the first flushed light of morning came  
    A hymn to God upsoared into the sky,  
    And a new speech was given to the earth.



## XIV

### SAINT ALPHEGE<sup>1</sup>

UPON the octave of green Easter Day  
From sorrowing London came the heathen host  
With their great hostage—off the Kentish coast  
Black Danish warships like a storm-cloud lay;  
And there at feast, his head half turned away,  
Unshaken by fierce taunt or furious boast,  
Most resolute when he was threatened most,  
Brave Alphege looked across the windy bay.

An April dusk hid sunny Greenwich town,  
And cuckoos called from woods along the shore:  
He heard them, though the ox-skulls whistled by,  
Beholding ere the battle-axe flashed down  
His country's future—Britain free once more!  
Then fell the Saxon saint content to die.

<sup>1</sup>Archbishop of Canterbury, he chose death to save his people from paying ransom to the Danes in 1012.

## XV

### THE CATHEDRAL

EACH lonely haunt where vanished tribes have dwelt  
Still holds a time-worn god long overthrown,  
Or ruined temple where dark woods have grown,  
With whose cold shrines warm earth has kindly dealt;  
For through all passing ages man has felt  
He has not wandered aimless or alone,  
And here within these walls of hallowed stone  
At last before Love's very Presence knelt.

No blood of victims round the altar clings,  
Where He whose guerdon was a thorny crown  
Is sacrificed for men perpetually;  
And gifts of gold are dimmed by greater things,—  
The Bread in pity shared, the Life laid down  
That they who sit in darkness may be free.

## XVI

### HUGH OF SAINT VICTOR

THE sun sinks lower in the cypress-trees,  
A flower of light gleams through the fountain's spray,  
And down green paths a hundred lilies sway  
Lifting their gold and silver to the breeze;  
But he who lingers there upon his knees  
Heeds not the bell that marks the closing day,  
Nor prayers low chanted within walls of gray  
Before an altar's holy mysteries.

To him all music merges in one tone,  
All colours blend until each lovely hue  
A veil of pure transparent brightness weaves;  
There on the ground he kneels, but not alone,—  
Silent as star-rise or the fall of dew  
God moves among bowed grass and trembling leaves.



## XVII

### SAINT FRANCIS

THE mossy paths that bore the patient herd  
Had led him far beyond the burning town  
By quiet pools where leaping sunbeams drown,  
And as he passed the lambs knew him and stirred;  
From out the tangled boughs each shy wild bird  
Like loosened leaves came fluttering slowly down  
Upon his ragged robe of dusty brown  
To hear the gentle music of his word.

But when the night sighed through the cloudy pine  
The green wood trembled with a seraph's wings,—  
A moment flamed the Vision, then was gone!  
Long, long he lay beneath the matted vine,  
So still amid the song of waking things,  
And on his body Christ's Wounds red as dawn.

## XVIII

### A WELL-SIDE

A SILVER chiming broke the tranquil spell  
That broods above wide wastes of amber brown,  
Then at the green edge of a shining town  
Knelt ten strange camels, and each bore a bell;  
One after one thin topaz shadows fell,  
A star shone—then a maiden wandered down  
Wearing her gleaming pitcher like a crown,  
And pitied them so thirsty by the well.

When she gave drink, her tender unveiled face  
Was as a Spring moon in the twilight hour  
Upon the earth-cooled water far below;  
How little dreamed she of that unborn race—  
Mother of Israel, gathered like a flower  
From golden lands long centuries ago!

## XIX

### THE SPIRIT AND THE LAW

UPON lone mountain-sides they stood apart:  
One on immortal stone did roughly trace  
Laws that still shape the conscience of a race  
As the bright North Star shapes a seaman's chart;  
Then came another, He whose tender art  
Moved multitudes to seek through time and space  
The brooding Love that craves a dwelling-place  
Within the mystery of the human heart.

The grass that blows along the country ways,  
The little leaves between the earth and sky,  
The deepened lustres of an April dove  
Own light the only law of their brief days;  
And as in light all colours folded lie,  
The Prophets and the Law are lost in Love.



## XX

### THE THREE MOTHERS

BEHIND man silent stand the mighty three:  
The great dim earth whose eager life up pressed  
To live a little hour upon her breast,  
Forgetful of its frail mortality;  
And Eve that with the fruit of Eden's tree  
Started mankind upon the weary quest  
To find once more that long-lost place of rest,  
The Garden gained by piteous Calvary;

Last the meek Virgin, she who wondering heard  
An angel's voice low on the tranced air  
Greet her with heavenly music, "Mary, hail!"  
O Holy Mother of the Incarnate Word  
Who gave white Christmas to a world's despair,  
We kneel to thee, the Lily of death's vale.

## XXI

### THE REVELATION

BELOVÉD Saint, for you on Patmos shone  
The deathless One whose footsteps bright as brass  
Led from far Hell to where the sea of glass  
Surged without sound beneath the rainbowed throne;  
You saw the stars like seeds in autumn blown,  
The earth and sky fade like midsummer grass,  
And down from God the Holy City pass  
Radiant with gold and pearl and jasper-stone.

Amid the thunder of stupendous dooms  
And burning mystery of the Spirits Seven,  
Stood He whose Heart once beat beneath your head;  
And through the blinding lights and awful glooms  
You heard how Love unbars the Gate of Heaven  
Where pain shall cease and tears be comforted.

## XXII

### ACCORDING TO SAINT MARK

THE way was steep and wild; we watched Him go  
Through tangled thicket, over sharp-edged stone  
That tore His Feet, until He stood alone  
Upon the summit where four great winds blow;  
Fearful we knelt on the cold rocks below,  
For the o'erhanging cloud had larger grown,  
A strange still radiance through His Body shone  
Whiter than moonlight on the mountain snow.

Then two that flamed amber and amethyst  
Were either side Him, while low thunder rolled  
Down to the ravens in their deep ravine;  
But when we looked again, as through a mist  
We saw Him near us.—Like a pearl we hold  
Close to our hearts what we have heard and seen.



## XXIII

### JERUSALEM

THE way of palms He passed in simple state  
And they that hailed Him knew a breathless awe,  
The lame leapt at His side, the blind eyes saw  
That Heaven descended to the desolate;  
But where the temple rises chief priests wait—  
And He in whom the Roman found no flaw,  
Whose Love was greater than the ancient Law,  
Rides to His death beyond the city gate.

Jerusalem, what can efface the stain!  
Not full six days since He has entered in,  
And now the nails of Calvary pierce Him through;  
Yet wronged, forsaken, bearing mortal pain,  
Immortally He pardons your dark sin:  
Forgive them for they know not what they do.

## XXIV

### IN THE GARDEN

AT dusk of dawn the fragrant garden slept  
Full of a mystery the night had known,  
When Mary entered, trembling and alone,  
And as she trod the grassy way she wept;  
But from the place of deepest shadow crept  
A light most radiant—there was no stone!  
And the cold rock in which He rested shone  
Where two archangels holy vigil kept.

Wondering she saw the flame-white seraphim  
At that dark entrance bidding her rejoice,  
Yet on the flowers her tears fell one by one;  
Then turning comfortless in search of Him  
She heard the quiet music of a Voice,  
And Christ stood there against the rising sun.

## XXV

### THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

As they were hastening from Jerusalem  
There came a Man whose footfall gave no sound  
Nor left a trace upon the dusty ground,  
And He made plain all mysteries to them:  
The prophet line that led to Bethlehem  
Aflame with vision, and the Love unbound  
In that still dawn when life immortal crowned  
The lonely death upon the dark Tree-stem.

The little town was reached at eventide,  
And as He sate and blessed the food there seemed  
A light upon them, though the day was dead;  
They saw then Who had journeyed by their side  
Only to lose Him—and each thought he dreamed:  
But on the table lay the broken bread.



## XXVI

### THE PARTING

THAT He might better of Love's mystery tell  
    Into a lonely mountain they withdrew,  
    Day's golden fire cooled in deep wells of dew  
About His Head with softened splendour fell;  
And in each heart that heard the last farewell  
    A quickening joy and deepening sorrow grew,  
    And all were hushed—even the doubtful knew  
His was the power of Heaven and of Hell.

When He had ceased, a mighty wind rushed by  
    From far beyond the sunset's cloudless rim,  
    And over them a glory seemed to bend;  
Then like a star He rose into the sky,  
    Sadly they watched the glowing light grow dim  
    And heard the echoes ring, "Until the End."

*Other Selections From*  
SHADOW OF THE PERFECT ROSE

*"Its roots are twined about those lives more fair  
Who fashioned with their dreams the world to be,  
Faint for the shadow of the Perfect Rose."*

FROM THE ROSE OF HILDESHEIM.

I

ON HIS MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY:

MARY T. CLARKE

WHEN death like a sea-tide removes each trace  
Of well-known things, I shall not pray for white  
Transcendent visions or worlds amber bright,  
But I shall seek you in that lonely place;  
For all the star-symphonies that roll through space  
And all the wonder of unfolded light  
Are in the music of a voice, the sight  
Of a smile seen on a long-vanished face.

And if I find you waiting for me there,  
Just as you waited that day years ago  
When birds flamed in the cherry tree's cool foam,  
And I back from dull months of school to share  
The June with you,—O smile to let me know  
That it is Summer and that I am Home!



## II

### OCTOBER

IN MEMORY OF THOMAS BIRD MOSHER<sup>1</sup>

THE yellow woods that yesterday were still  
Are stripped by angry winds, and everywhere  
A flaming splendour, an immense despair,  
Await the work of Winter's ancient will;  
Great battles thunder through the sky until  
Among the cornfields, desolate and bare,  
The labourers pause to listen, unaware  
That angels stand above the burning hill.

And when the storm is hushed, they take no heed  
Of Gabriel bending near an orchard-close,  
Where one lone robin lingers on to sing;  
Or that more softly than the wingèd seed  
A word has fallen: but the torn earth knows,  
And all the autumn meadows dream of Spring.

<sup>1</sup>Distinguished publisher of Portland, Me.; friend to the poet.

### III

## THE VIRGIN OF WHITE PINES<sup>1</sup>

ABOVE a lonely woodway, throned between  
The boughs of russet, Della Robbia's Rose,  
Meek, luminous with tranquil beauty glows,  
Madonna of the Forest, Heaven's Queen;  
No angels through the glimmering poplars lean,  
But frankincense from pine and balsam flows,  
And treasure from the goldenrod that throws  
A shadow on her garments' ivory sheen.

More lustrous than the earth's white lilies shine  
Her sculptured hands which holds the ages' Light,  
More blue than earth's the sky from which she bends,  
That travelers, passing by her wayside shrine,  
May see beyond this dream of day and night  
The Star of Wonder where the dark wood ends.

<sup>1</sup>A Della Robbia shrine set up by the late Ralph R. Whitehead and Mrs. Whitehead, his friends, near their home Byrdcliffe, Woodstock, Ulster Co., N. Y.

#### IV

### EVE OF THE GUARDIAN ANGELS

ACROSS the golden dial of the day  
Pale shadows creep, the yellow leaves descend,  
And as a harbinger of autumn's end  
Arcturus leads the orioles away;  
To ghostly breath the saffron branches sway,  
And in the gathering twilight seems to bend  
A wingèd presence, closer than a friend,  
Upon this eve of angels, silver-gray.

It breathes of worlds from whence the spirit came,  
The vanished memory of a Morning Star  
Where dooms and shining destinies were spun.  
Bend low and speak that long-forgotten Name,  
Thou the soul's Self and mighty avatar,  
Great guardian angel, brighter than the sun!



## V

## SAINT AGNES

EARTH has no lovelier miracle to show  
Of meadow, wood, or fragrant garden-place  
Than she whose life of innocence and grace  
Drew to her side an angel bending low,  
Who stood within the faggots' crimson glow  
When trumpets echoed through an armored space,  
And watched the dark flames round her gentle face  
Turn pale as moonlight, cool as April snow.

Still fresh with dawn she greets each waking year  
Frail as a simple flower amid the grass,  
Yet crowned by stars and clothed in spotless fleece;  
For when the snowdrop lifts its frosted spear,  
Led by her lambs the white processions pass  
And from her passion weave their robes of peace.

## VI

### SAINT AUGUSTINE

WITHIN the harbor restless sails are furled,  
And from the distant hillslopes dark with pine  
A night wind trembles in the purple vine,  
Lifting the leaves about his casement curled;  
Low on the waves a horn of light has pearled  
To amethyst the sky's long amber line,  
But he who sees the silver pathway shine  
Looks through his window on another world.

There glows a beauty deeper than the sea,  
Light fairer than the moon that rides above  
The moving wall of foamheads shoreward blown;  
And like a white gull circling wide and free,  
The Lover seeks changeless Face of Love,  
The Lonely wings his flight unto the Lone.

## VII

### BOETHIUS<sup>1</sup>

UNFINISHED fall his vellum scripts that hold  
The death-song of Rome's grandeur, for he hears  
A step of steel and through the dungeon peers  
A Gothic warrior greaved with burnished gold;  
He rises at the summons, weak and old,  
But godlike voices echo in his ears,  
And he goes forth to meet the flashing spears  
A martyr by great memories consoled.

Last of a high heroic lineage,  
He faces death; yet can those calm eyes see  
That old truth will arise forever young,  
Where Saxon Alfred bends before his page  
And from that lost world lights the worlds to be,  
Where Chaucer hymns it in a new-born tongue?

<sup>1</sup>Wrote in prison "Consolations of Philosophy".  
Executed on false charges 525 A.D.



## VIII

### SAINT BENEDICT

AN empire of eternal permanence  
He fortresses with choir and sunlit close;  
His law is labor, and one art he knows—  
The perfect service without recompense;  
He sends a legion forth in Love's defense,  
And on their standard Christ forever glows,—  
Helm'd by humility each soldier goes  
And armored strongly in obedience.

Within the monastery's quiet wall,  
Saint, artist, scholar, formed beneath his Rule,  
By the twelve steps of gold are starward led;  
And hear from those stern lips the New Law fall,  
As lifting up the laborer's heavy tool  
His great voice sounds, "Work and be comforted."

## IX

### SAINT BERNARD

BLUE gonfalons with silver lilies toss

As court and camp surround his purple hill,

Then all the glittering chivalry is still

To hear him mourn the Holy City's loss;

And when he tells them gold and gear are dross,

That slain crusaders through God's Wounds shall fill

Ranks left by fallen angels,—“ 'Tis His Will,”

They cry with quivering throats, “The Cross! The Cross!”

He waits with cowl thrown backward to the sun,

While shouting liegemen, sworn to serve his Lord,

In helm and gilded hauberk round him stir,

Yet knows that far Jerusalem is won

By him who slays the self with ghostly sword,

Who holds within his heart Christ's Sepulchre.

## X

### SAINT BONIFACE: APOSTLE TO THE GERMANS<sup>1</sup>

UPON the branches of an ancient oak  
Wild hunters hung their woad-blue battle-gear,—  
Round shields like suns and horns of fallow deer  
Shook when the windy oracle awoke;  
But though the god's deep voice of thunder spoke,  
Christ's woodman swung his axe-blade without fear  
That men might see the hidden stars draw near,  
And felled the great tree with his ringing stroke.

Then while he shaped the massive trunk anew,  
From every savage heart he sought to free  
Hate's bitter twilight dark as Druid boughs,  
Until about his sunlit clearing drew  
The forest clans to find the magic tree  
A holy hostel wherein Love might house.

<sup>1</sup>English-born, he cut down the Druid oak, sacred to THOR, the thunder-god, at Geismar. Died 755 A.D.



## XI

### SAINT HILDEGARDE<sup>1</sup>

A CHILD who holds a jeweled book of hours  
    Beneath wan cressets in a knightly hall,  
    She scarce can see the bucklered henchmen sprawl  
By hearth and high seat where the wolf-hound cowers;  
Then, on an arras gay with yellow flowers,  
    Beholds a vivid shaft of sunlight fall  
    Through stony slits above the moated wall  
That bowmen guard from battlemented towers.

Above her head the broken sunbeams stray,  
    Like glittering lances round a chosen knight  
    Who bears mailed Michael on his banderole;  
While in her heart there falls Love's greater ray,  
    Sent from the legions of the living Light  
    To flood the sunless castles of the soul.

<sup>1</sup>Of Bingen, Germany, prophetess, source of German mysticism. 1098-1179.

## XII

### THE ESPOUSAL OF SAINT GERTRUDE

THE virgin martyrs strew their rose-red boughs  
About her feet; the lusters lighting her,  
To whom the Courts of Heaven minister,  
Shine from the innocents' transparent brows;  
As in a thurible, her prayers and vows  
Rise in a cloud more fragrant than white myrrh  
Her guardian angel swings as thurifer  
Before the Presence of her soul's loved Spouse.

Mysterious elevation! There to rest  
Where glowing seraphs wing on fiery wing  
Behold the Eagle mated with the Dove;  
Where like a lily lifted to His Breast,  
She hears the harp of that Divine Heart sing  
In flaming chords a canticle of Love.

### XIII

#### SAINT CLARE

IN the wild darkness of the middle night  
Past boughs of yew and branches of the rose  
To feast with silver seraphim she goes,  
Cowled like a lily, virginal and white;  
As soft-winged moths, green-hued and amber bright,  
Fly in the ruddy gleam her lanthorn throws,  
So to a deeper flame her spirit glows,  
To Love who is the Light within all light.

She will not need her chains of glittering gold,  
For round her fall, invisible and straight,  
Bonds that no mortal fingers can untwine.  
The stones she treads are gray and bitter cold,  
But in the shadows of a dark cell wait  
The Bread of Angels and the God's bright Wine.



## XIV

### ALBERTUS MAGNUS<sup>1</sup>

FROM fiery crucibles as alchemist,  
What fierce elixir wrought of liquid gold  
Pours he in magic cups; or does he hold  
Enclosed within his heart the Eucharist?  
And what wild spirit is his lutanist,  
Half-heard behind the curtain's scarlet fold;  
Or is he by an angel's power controlled  
And kneels to heaven's Queen in holy tryst?

Bred by his mystery the legend starts  
About a mind too myriad for men's range,  
That makes all knowledge its divining-rod;  
But he, through Science and the Seven Arts,  
Finds Love the alchemy with which to change  
Each baser metal to the gold of God.

<sup>1</sup>Albert the Great. Famous Dominican. Summed up knowledge for his age: 1206-1280.

XV

SAINT JULIANA OF NORWICH

WITH homely wisdom blithe and bitter-sweet  
Her words reveal the largess Love will shower;  
Her ways are simple as a cloistered flower,  
Filled with the wild breath of the Paraclete.  
And wanderers who tread the dusty street  
Pause by her wall beneath the sunlit tower,  
Where silver voices cry the passing hour,  
Then go upon their way with lightened feet.

Though Knights of iron build their barricade,  
And stealthy shapes of sin and death surround  
The outer circle of her shining cell,  
Over the world's wall, barred by light and shade,  
The crystal trumpets of the Springtime sound  
Her golden tiding, "All shall yet be well."

## XVI

### SAINT JEANNE D'ARC: THE SABLE STALLION

WE saw the sable stallion plunge and rear,  
Over the saddle-bow his black mane poured,  
And none dared grasp the crimson bridle cord  
But from the shallow doorways gaped in fear;  
Then suddenly the virgin knight drew near,  
Five golden crosses gleamed upon her sword,  
A lance upbore the lilies of her Lord,  
And "Lead him to the Rood" came ringing clear.

How still he stood—the demon put to rout!  
Archer and spearman, looking on her face  
Felt shriven of the foe that lurks within;  
And gates of hell were shaken by their shout,  
"Lead on for France, to conquer through the grace  
Of Michael, Margaret, and Saint Catherine!"



## XVII

### SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL TO MOTHER ELIZABETH SETON, S.C.<sup>1</sup>

LURID against the sky, with threatening spars  
The crimson galleys of the corsair glide,  
Beneath their prows the cloven waves divide  
And down the night ring clashing scimitars;  
While he, a captive, chained to iron bars,  
Watches the gulls beyond the troubled tide,  
Where on a sea of breathless beauty ride  
The masts of fire, the fleet of silver stars.  
And like white birds poised high above the gale,  
He sees another host around them glow,  
Cowled with gray cloud, heroic, calm and free—  
Knights of the Cross, whose quiet barques will sail  
South to the desert, north to ice and snow,  
That Love may sound the last unchartered sea.

<sup>1</sup>Foundress of the Sisters of Charity.

## XVIII

### SAINT TERESA

"BASIL, rosemary, rue and lavender!

The well is dry, the water-wheels are still,

The river can no longer sluice the mill:

How shall the flowers in my heart's garden stir?"

"When self shall sleep within a sepulchre,

Rain from the sky and healing dew shall fill

Each withered path, and there may walk at will.

Love seen by Mary as a gardener.

"Along the border violets will spread

Humility, and lilies light the grass,

Though snow fall early and the Spring be late;

But where the bower of roses blossoms red

With thy heart's blood, there shall the Lover pass

And there the Keeper of the Stars will wait."

XIX

MONTSERRAT:  
SAINT IGNATIUS LOYOLA

BEFORE the altar gleams no virgin sword,  
    Sharp gilded spurs or cloak of ermined vair,  
    But armed with pilgrim staff and robe of hair  
A knight girds on the knotted hempen cord;  
Death's fiend is fiercer than the paynim horde—  
    A ghostly harness doth the champion wear,  
    And weapons forged on Calvary must bear  
To serve his Liege, the star-embannered Lord.

And never myrtle garlands lightly tossed  
    From balconies along a torch-lit street  
Shall crown the brow that reddened thorns have crossed;  
    Yet on drear fields where sin and sorrow meet  
His might shall conquer legions of the lost,  
    And lead them vassels to Love's piercèd Feet.



XX

SAINT ISAAC JOGUES

BENT toward his breviary he does not mark  
    Wolf-howl or Mohawk's stealthy moccasin,  
    As savage hunters shod with beaver skin  
File past and loose an arrow's whistling arc;  
For through the cabin wall of cedar bark  
    Like drifted snow the angels enter in,  
    And though the hearth-flame flickers blue and thin,  
His Dream of Christ still lights the winter dark.

These hands that turn the pages never pressed  
    The whining bow-string, yet red chiefs will yield  
    Before his God-like patience to endure;  
And he, the mightier hunter, will not rest,  
    But seek in pathless wood and burning field  
    The fair white quarry Love alone can lure.

XXI

THE VISION OF MARIE  
OF THE URSULINES

UPON the crystal capes of Labrador  
The Virgin gazes from an arch of stone  
Over the woods and waste of water blown  
In foaming whirlpools past a ragged shore;  
There where the rapids lift their sullen roar  
And eagles nest against the sun, a throne  
Crowned with black thunder waits Her, overgrown  
With yellow elm and scarlet sycamore.

There the white virgins, led by Her, will sail  
To the Long House of birch and cedar bark,  
Where the red runners come from east and west;  
Until Her lilies light the forest trail,  
And the grim mountains, shouldering the dark,  
Bear Her pale star upon their granite crest.

## XXII

### TEKAKWITHA<sup>1</sup>

In the rock shadow spawn the silver trout  
And crows flap cawing over muddy flats  
Green with the rushes for the woven mats,  
And tassels of the willow blow about.  
Beside a mildewed patch where maize will sprout,  
Their arms vermilioned from the earthen vats,  
Crouch the old women, brown as wrinkled bats,  
Watching the river while the ice goes out.

Three tawny hunters file along the shore,  
Where cloistered like a red swamp lily dreams  
Dark Tekakwitha, daughter of the moon.  
They dare not pass beyond her cabin door,  
For at her side a haloed spirit gleams  
Blinding as snowlight on an April noon.

<sup>1</sup>Lily of The Mohawks, a flower of Christian life among savages.



XXIII

THE BLACKROBES:  
MISSION OF SAULT SAINTE MARIE

LOVER of chivalry and royal race,  
Chabanal stands within the cabin's gloom—  
On either side of him naked chieftains loom,  
Watching the words his icy fingers trace;  
Chaumonot kneels, with firelight on his face,  
Dreaming that angels fill the squalid room;  
And Brèbeuf, dauntless in the shade of doom,  
Blesses the Bread of Life with tender grace.

A shaft of light shines on the frozen bay!  
The lanthorn of a wanderer who returns  
To show the tragic splendor of his scars?  
Neither a traveler's torch nor break of day:  
From the horizon to the zenith burns  
A Crown of Fire that dims the polar stars.

## XXIV

### THE FOURTH GOSPEL

The sea's great voices into silence blend  
And dawn's vermilion peaks are hushed to hear  
The Voice of Love that casts out every fear  
And calls its creatures to their ordered end:  
As scattered flames in one bright arc ascend  
To find the center of the golden sphere,  
In seraph-splendor sons of earth draw near,  
Loved to the loving, friend to perfect friend.

Here in the light of lonely skies and far,  
Pale habitations of the spirit gleam,  
Old when the dayspring took his flaming throne;  
Here through the meadows of the Morning Star  
Falls the faint music heard within a dream—  
The Lover's accents calling to His Own.

XXV

SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS

The lord of all the lore that man had found,  
He placed the dream the longing heart had won  
Above the webs of logic subtly spun,  
And reason with white revelation crowned;  
In skies too vast for wondering thought to sound  
His soul was lifted like a lonely sun  
About whose fire mysterious planets run  
And by whose law the scattered stars are bound.

Beyond the garnered wisdom of the earth  
He sought the starlit deep with spirit led  
Through adoration to Love's dwelling-place;  
Till in the Host where life has mystic birth  
He saw the God Who gave the Wine and Bread  
Unveil the hidden beauty of His Face.



*Adapted from Scholastic Magazine*  
*October 14, 1933*

**Brief Garland for a Dedicated Poet:**  
**THOMAS S. JONES Jr.**

By JOHN L. FOLEY

Across the fields of yesterday  
    He sometimes comes to me,  
A little lad just back from play—  
    The lad I used to be.

And yet he smiles so wistfully  
    Once he has crept within,  
I wonder if he hopes to see  
    The man I might have been.

THOMAS S. JONES, JR., author of this and many other much-quoted lyrics, died October 16, 1932, at the age of 49, from the effects of influenza contracted abroad. Since 1915, he had been a noted figure on Morningside Heights and the Columbia University campus. There at his cousins' home, he wrote great religious poetry. There near the rising Cathedral of St. John the Divine, whose windows inspired some of his best sonnets, he died deeply mourned.

Professors who were his friends grieved over his untimely death. "He was the best man I ever knew," wrote one,<sup>1</sup> "and he was a great poet"; another . . . "He was a bright light on the campus—my only regret is that my young son can never know him"<sup>2</sup>; still another . . . "He dared to face spiritual issues at which most men flinch"<sup>3</sup>; and another, Professor of English at Union College<sup>4</sup> . . . "His rare laughter, his sound worldly sense, his matchless gift of throwing a robe of glamor around the commonplace, his magic touch of heightening life—those things are immortal like his lyrics: they must be kept alive." Robert P. Tristram Coffin, poet, Professor of English, Bowdoin College, wrote a magnificent poem in his memory. An elderly woman neighbor said, "I never realized I could miss anyone so much"; and a longtime friend . . . "He was the most fascinating being I have ever known."

"I thought him a very handsome man," observed Dr. Juliana Haskell, director of the Women's Graduate Club at Columbia. "He looked as one thinks a poet ought to look; no small part of his charm lay in his unusual coloring, best realizable in a painting." By her efforts an artist is now painting his portrait. With very expressive eyes of luminous gray-blue, graceful hands, an unusually musical and vibrant voice, and a face youthfully pink and unlined, crowned with a leonine mass of gray-white hair, he quickened pulses and the air of any meeting-place he frequented. Happy, generous, and magnetic, gracious and fun-loving, he had a quick flash of humor for his many friends and neighbors.

1. Profs. Raymond M. Weaver; 2. M. M. Hoover; 3. John L. Gerig, and 4. Raymond M. Herrick.



Educated in private schools, his mother having died when he was twelve, he began writing verse at Dr. Holbrook's School, Ossining, and at Cascadilla School he first heard Tennyson and Browning read by Thornton Jenkins, now Headmaster of Malden (Massachusetts) High School, co-author of Gray and Jenkins' Latin textbook. The poet never forgot his debt to Mr. Jenkins. Class poet at Cornell University, 1904, he had his first book published just after getting his bachelor's degree. At Cornell, he was deeply influenced by Dr. Hiram Corson and Dr. Charles Tyler. On the dramatic staff of *The New York Times*, he was, according to Alexander Woollcott's "Legend of Tom Jones" in his *New Yorker* column, the only critic who saw the real value of Barrie's "Peter Pan" when at first it seemed a failure. He saw it every night for a month, and hailed the play and the star, Maude Adams, his friend since those days. Later he became cable service editor for Reuter's, the international news agency. But throughout his active life, few knew that since he suffered nervous exhaustion in 1907, he had never been able to walk far alone.

From 1907-14 he had to make his home because of ill-health at Utica, his father's home. Always he turned to the beautiful hills of Hamilton and of Trenton Falls near by for healing. When I was a student at Colgate University, I first saw Jones there in the village of Hamilton during December, 1907, and early in 1908, where by old Dr. Ford's orders he came for rest. I was not to know him until June, 1910. In the autumn, after my mother died, I needed the friendship he generously gave. And in June,



1911, when he asked me to swear enduring friendship kneeling in the Church of Saint John the Evangelist, Utica, I did so gladly. By the autumn of 1914 on inheriting a competence from his father's estate he was able to return to New York City, where he first made his home with an aunt and later until his death with cousins in an apartment near Columbia on Morningside Heights.

William Rose Benèt, the poet, in his "Phoenix's Nest" column of *The Saturday Review of Literature*, commented on him thus:

"Thomas S. Jones, Jr., was a notable poet whose work as a dramatic critic and cable service writer was in his time distinguished. Some of his sonnets deserve to survive oblivion. We quote from the following splendid one from his pen in memory of this dedicated artist who wrought beautiful things with a fine integrity."

Mr. Benèt chose "Zarathustra," but here note this by Mr. Jones, for he was like the poet he described in

#### THE POET

O eyes that see the loveliness of things,  
Flowers whose tender cups hold as the Grail  
The dewy wine of heaven and the frail  
Wonder of insects' little questing wings;  
O ears that hear when a bird freely sings,  
Or when the weeping winds of autumn wail,  
Or trees at twilight whisper low their tale—  
The harmony from which Creation springs.

O soul that knows all longing and all tears,  
Frailty of flesh, the spirit's rapt communion,  
Mysterious captive spurning mortal bars—  
Thy wings lift thee above all earthly fears  
To hold with Love and Beauty deathless union,  
To learn the glorious meaning of the stars.

Despite ill-health and the fever of modern life, he burned to pierce the hidden reality of Nature, to reveal the secret strength of towering men and women—scientists, seers, artists, saints and martyrs, lovers of beauty and all light. Like his friend, Louise Imogen Guiney, with a "passion for perfection," he kept his gift as bard and seer, as did Milton, only for the best. He looked on nature with loving eyes. His lines beat with color and landscape. He saw, much as modern chemists do in crystals, indestructible designs within matter. Always he sought evidences and intimations of God in nature and in man. In the cup of a rose or a violet, he saw the Holy Grail of perfect beauty; in a great sacrificial life like St. Benedict's "the perfect service without recompense," or in that of Lucretius, the vision

"That, freed from fear and hope, mankind may rise  
Through courage stronger than the gods or death."

In *The Rose-Jar*, dedicated to his mother, is the flaming love in which true hearts never fail. His singing strength is clear in his early lyrics: over a hundred have been set to music by leading composers like H. A. Matthews, Huntington Woodman, Charles Wakefield Cadman, F. Morris Class, Fay Foster, Deems Taylor and Mrs. Morris Buchanan. One of these from *The Rose-Jar* is



## THE LITTLE GHOSTS

Where are they gone, and do you know  
If they come back at fall of dew,  
The little ghosts of long ago,  
That long ago were you?  
And all the songs that ne'er were sung,  
And all the dreams that ne'er came true,  
Like little children dying young—  
Do they come back to you?

In *The Voice in the Silence* is evidence of his mastery gained by contemplation, by the inner life, and by communion with nature breathing a sense of imminence of the Divine. "In Excelsis" contains this specific dedication:

Waiting, I turn to Thee,  
Expectant, humble, and on bended knee;  
Youth's radiant fire  
Only to burn at thy unknown desire—  
For this alone has Song been granted me.  
Upon thy altar burn me at Thy will;  
All wonders fill  
My cup, and it is Thine;  
Life's precious wine  
For this alone: for Thee.

"All he wrote," so his friend Sister Mary James<sup>1</sup> felt, "has the chastened loveliness of an altar white with May." Indeed, he was a dedicated artist. John Oxenham, the British poet, put it thus: "It is a long time since I have come across any poems that gave me such pleasure in every way. Their artistry is beyond praise." Raymond M. Weaver, biographer of Melville, rated him thus:  
<sup>1</sup>Author, *Poets At Prayer*.



"*The Sonnets (of the Cross)*, judged soberly as poetry, seem to me to be one of the most remarkable sequences in our literature. For limpidity of emotion and adequacy of expression, they are classic . . . They are mystic without loss of precision in color, outline, or idea—a characteristic of perfect art . . . caught only by our best poets in their best moments."

The poet John G. Neihardt called his art "Merlin music," and the poet's friend, Jessie B. Rittenhouse, praised his work in this fashion:

"It is this vision (of perfection) which has been the source . . . of his poetry . . . it is inherent in all his work . . . Into one line of an early lyric he has put perhaps the secret of that beauty which trances his work with a certain magic stillness, the line which speaks of 'That last strange peace whose name is loneliness.'"

Dr. Lynn Harold Hough, Professor at Drew University, wrote that while such work as Mr. Jones's was being written in America, there was hope for America. Note also that Dr. Houston Peterson wrote in *The Book of Sonnet Sequences*:

"What Wordsworth failed to do in the Ecclesiastical Sonnets, Jones has accomplished for the early centuries of the English Church . . . Each single line is a perfectly wrought jewel, yet each single poem seems to harbor an eternity. As Dr. Henry Wells has said: . . . 'The sonnet as written by Mr. Jones is at times narratory, always pictorial and always intensely suggestive. He invariably contrived to place an image, inobvious and vast, within a small compass.'"

Roger Sherman Loomis, Professor in the Columbia University Graduate School, admired Jones' work on Arthurian Literature, especially his sonnets on *King Arthur*, *Merlin*, *Taliesin*, and others. As a friend of Jones, Loomis sent the poet, Robert P. Tristram Coffin, a friend, Jones' *Sonnets of the Saints*, after reading which Coffin wrote Jones, almost on his birthday in 1926, these chivalric words:

"I do not think there is any poet writing today in America who sees and knows beauty as you see and know it. It is like a flawless crystal through all your work. There is another gift you have. It puts your work beside 'THE HOUND OF HEAVEN.' It is brighter because you do not have the excess of involution that Thompson has. It makes your endings like a star."

These lines by Jones bear out such tributes: "The fragrance of a lost simplicity"; "The memory of immemorial fires"; "Dust dulls the dew-white splendor of their wings," and this sestet from "The Spirit and the Law" for nature magic:

The grass that blows along the country ways,  
The little leaves between the earth and sky,  
The deepened lustres of an April dove  
Own light the only law of their brief days;  
And as in light all colors folded lie,  
The Prophets and the Law are lost in Love.

Artist and mystic, he turned away from our noisy and hasty days to search out great lives as true guides for people today. In his great religious sequences, *The Sonnets of the Cross* and *Sonnets of the Saints*, he powerfully expressed Christ's ideal of the perfectibility



of man in civilizing by the early English Church Ireland, England, Wales, Scotland, and Europe. Here are included sonnets on such pioneers as Illtyd, Columba, Caedmon, Hilda, Chad, John Scotus Erigena, Hugh of Avalon, Hugh of St. Victor; on Sts. Francis, Veronica, Agnes, Genevieve of Paris, Margaret, Elizabeth of Hungary, Catherine, Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, John of the Cross—an amazing galaxy of folk striving to find

“The brooding love that craves a dwelling place  
Within the mystery of the human heart.”

In *Akhnoton and Other Sonnets* he traced “the Prophet line that led to Bethlehem,” Gautama (the Buddha), Lao-tse, Euripides, Socrates, Plato, Vergil, Julian the Apostate; the Hebrew Prophets, David, Solomon, Ezekiel, Isaiah; next, in *Six Sonnets*, his subjects were the Celtic Light-Bringers—King Arthur, Taliesin, and Merlin the Wizard. Six summers abroad with two friends weave through his work—pilgrimages to places hallowed by great lives. Spencer Miller, Jr., one of these friends, carried the original manuscript of the twenty-six *Sonnets of the Cross* to England, where it was published by the Society of S. S. Peter and Paul, London, June, 1922. The June 1942 edition is the seventh reprinting.

Again, moved after a voyage on the St. Lawrence and Saguenay Rivers by the heroism of the Jesuit explorers, he wrote *Sonnets of the New World* on the newly sainted North American martyrs shrined at Auriesville, New York,—Isaac Jogues, de Brèbeuf, Garnier, and on Tekakwitha, Lily of the Mohawks. Stirred, too, by the courage of the Maid of France, recalled by the recumbent statue by Ann Hyatt in the French Chapel at the Cathedral of



St. John the Divine, he did the first English sonnet sequence on Jeanne d'Arc. These hold, Dr. Louis Cons said, more of the spirit of fifteenth century France than does his course thereon at Columbia. Art also claimed him in *Leonardo and Other Sonnets*. His last book, *The Image*, June, 1932, added these: Plotinus, Sts. Francis and Clare, Juliana of Norwich, the English mystical poets, Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, and Crashaw, ending with his true note in "The Fourth Gospel" on friendship. Robert P. T. Coffin agreed with Raymond Weaver's conclusion in *The New York Herald Tribune Books*, Dec. 26, 1937 when he wrote: "These sonnets are as a group, I am convinced, second to none in the English language."

Some critics believe that as the poet of stillness and inner peace, he will be remembered permanently among English poets. Men may yet drink thirstily from the chalice of his poetry when time forces them, by a fairer code, to face life with leisure for contemplation in a newer Kingdom at last come. His remains rest in a beautiful leafy cemetery at his birthplace, Boonville, N. Y., near the Adirondacks. A friend placed at his head a Celtic cross carved<sup>2</sup> with his line "Love is the Kingdom of the Holy Ghost." Friends desire a stone seat nearby carved with this from his *Quatrains on Immortality*:  
"The farthest wave will reach land's rock-crowned crest,  
The last year's leaves merge with earth's teeming sod,  
Dawn's scattered light is gathered in the west,  
And birth and death begin and end in God."

<sup>2</sup>Designed by the poet's friend, Earl Purdy, designer of the two initial capitals in this book.

His friend, the Rev. Desmond Morse Boycott, founder of the Song School of St. Mary of the Angels, London, England, is dedicating the site to him and raising a sweet-toned bell "to the poet who heard the heavenly voices." Perhaps it may be his destiny to be like a lover of the gods as he imagined such a one to be in glory:

"Him Merlin robes in garments blue as air,  
And leads him trembling to the Hidden Seat  
To feast with heroes and the Sons of Song."

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SONNETS OF THE CROSS



by Thomas, S. Jones, Jr.