

## The First Time I Saw The Sea

In my child's wonder-cherishable,  
 Eager eyes  
 Had run horizoning strip  
 Of halfway-out-from-Souris  
 Souris Line Road;  
 Red-worm wriggling  
 Rods of summer sand,  
 Hot and glorious  
 To the pincering toes of boys.  
 And those eyes  
 Had drunk in  
 The little hummock-hills  
 In barren back-of-Nancy's fields,  
 And had measured  
 The straightaway for running  
 Opposite-Rice's-commons,  
 Plodded by promiscuous  
 Summer cattle;  
 And they had stalked  
 The pinfish and the trout  
 In Kitty's Brook,  
 With cool, cool banks,  
 God-made for boys  
 To lose their primers on.  
 And those eyes  
 Had guided feet  
 Into the chill  
 Forbidden wading  
 Of Churchill's cranberry bog!  
 They had seen much,  
 Those eyes,  
 And cherished much:  
 Even the woolen-scarf-wound figure  
 Of Alex Red John  
 Leading his stallion.

\* \* \*

Then reason's age  
 Drew on,  
 And blue covered  
 First Communion catechism,  
 Learned at home,  
 Led me into the large presence  
 Of dogma-demanding,  
 Orthodoxy-upholding

(Loved and lovable)  
Formidable,  
Father John:  
And the Our Father  
And the I Confess  
And the I believe,  
And all the Adam-and-Eve  
Answers  
Ran out on me,  
Leaving utmost ignorance  
Of God  
And Holy Mother Church.  
And I failed more wretchedly  
Under the eye  
Of one year older,  
Hero-worshipped brother,  
Who knew it all.  
And little heretic I  
Went, unhouseled,  
In disgrace,  
Abandoned for another year.  
\* \* \*

Fraternally half bough back  
From desolation  
By segment of Caleb's cream-ginger candy,  
Biting the tongue,  
Fell I  
Into the wing  
Of flying phalanx,  
Time-ever-expendable boys  
Pointed at the shore.  
Behold  
Before the hitherto half-planted garden  
Of those six year eyes  
Leapt up,  
Leapt in  
The sea,  
The great and blue-green hill  
Skimming  
Up to the sky:  
And it pushed aside my grief,  
And sat in my soul,  
And built a house,  
And dwelt therein:  
And out and in  
My being  
With all the glory shone



Of men in ships  
And seas to climb upon.

\* \* \*

Anxious, I trundled home,  
Axle-riding on R. J. wagon,  
Tortured by thought of Mother's heart-break  
(Who with consoling kiss  
Softened my excommunication bonds  
And sent me out to play).  
And often  
Through the following,  
Freedom-golden days  
Of clover fields,  
Of raspberries,  
And robins,  
And brownish-thrushy-looking birds  
With nests,  
And rumours of the bear  
Seen at Elmira,  
And all the fun and fuss  
Of wondrous cousin Gillises  
Who came to play with us,  
And the evening Arkansas Travellers,  
My father played  
(With the "Say, old Man" words put in),  
And all my mother's bedtime  
Once-upon-a-time's—  
Those eyes still sought the glory  
They had seen;  
I crept into my secret heart  
And climbed the mighty mountain  
Of God's Souris sea.

—A. P. C.

