

## "THE CALL OF THE ROAD"

I know a little road winding to the Sea,  
So with brogues, and a stick, and my old knapsack,  
And my well-filled briar to keep me company—  
I slip into the night, on the long track back.

With the clear stars above me, I travel happily,  
Up hill and down dale, with here and there a twist  
By little, low houses slumbering quietly,  
Silvering in the dusk, with the white moon-mist.

Tall against the shadows of the blue-black Firs,  
Slender, chaste birch trees, shine ghost-white.  
Not a dead leaf rattles, not a green leaf stirs,  
In the long, hushed silence, of the windless night.

Once from the low woods, I heard the woodcocks wing,  
The deep, lonely boom, of the bittern's call.  
The splash of a leaping trout in some crystal spring,  
Above the little sounds of night,—then silence,—all.

And high overhead, from the moon's silver rim,  
Cloud-fringes flutter, and scatter as they fly  
In gossamer veils, where the bright plants swim  
Through the Milk Maid's Path, down the hollow of the sky.

Starlight and lamp-light beckon on the way.  
Heavy is the scent of the wild pear tree,  
With the damp rich smell of the ploughland clay,  
And the tang of the marshes coming up to me.

The hours and the stars, with my feet march on,  
Mile on mile, from night into day.  
Wind in the fir-tops, a sea-wind new-born  
Sweeps down the sky, for the Break O' Day.

And my step falls light on the new-springing grass,  
Washed with the dew, and the soft, summer rain.  
The black shadows lighten behind me while I pass,  
As the night goes gray, and the pale stars wane.

Soon at the end of the road I will be,  
Where the long-shore tides run sullen and swift,  
With the Red Dawn a-tremble on a glimmering Sea,  
And the leaden breakers breasting the white sand-drift.

And I set my face to the salt wind's sting,  
And the call of the ground-swell heaving free,  
And I know in my heart, there's but one answering,  
"The lift of a ship, and a wet deck for me."

—F. J. Macd, '09