Louisa Lawson

The Lonely Crossing And Other Poems

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THE END

A man on foot came down to the river,
A silent man, on the road alone,
And dropped his swag with a chill-born shiver,
And sat to rest on a wind-worn stone.

He slid then down to the long grass, bending His arms above as the resting do, And watched a snow-white chariot trending Its wind-made way o'er the wedgewood blue.

In it sat one of the fairest ladies
That mind could mould, in a crown of white,
But close beside came a fiend from Hades
In a chariot black as the heart of night.

The man, he sighed as the fiend would clasp her, Then smiled as the wind by a wise decree Her white steeds turned to the streets of Jaspar, And Satan drave to a sin-black sea.

The wattles waved, and their sweet reflection In crystal fathoms responses made;
The sunlight silted each soft inflection
And fretted with silver the short'ning shade.

A restless fish made the thin reeds shiver, A waking wind made the willows moan, But the resting man by the noon-bright river Lay dreaming on, in the long grass prone.

* * * * *

The bell-bird called to its tardy lover,
The grebe clouds all to the west had sped,
But the river of death had a soul crossed over,
The man with the swag on the bank was dead.

Coming Home

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Going round the back street, Through the twilight lane, While the folk at church meet — Coming home again. Faded hat and creasy. Long since it was new; Tent-fly torn and greasy, Bluey showing through. Billy burnt and battered, Boots all badly burst, Lace and lace-holes shattered. Trousers at their worst. Blankets like a riddle. With a streak of white Down the threadbare middle When against the light. Young face lined and sunburnt, Hair just turning grey; Many a lesson unlearnt Since he went away. But he need not bother. There's a bite and sup; And for all the other — Mother'll fix him up.

Back Again

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Oh, my boy, come in, do, You are back at last: Years since last we saw you — How the time has passed! Have a bath and shave first? No? A cup of tea? Think you want a rest worst? Dear, oh deary me! Look, dear, at your boots, too, All cut with the rocks: And you haven't, have you, Any mended socks? They are always tearing? Threw them all away? Alberts you are wearing? Goodness, what are they? Felt that you were coming, So I wrote to Bob; He says things are humming, And you'll get a job. Now, dear, don't come near me, You're all over dust: Can you smoke? Oh, dear me, If you really must.

The Hour Is Come

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How did she fight? She fought well. How did she light? Ah, she fell. Why did she fall? God, who knows all, Only can tell.

Those she was fighting for — they Surely would go to her? Nay! What of her pain! Their's is the gain. Ever the way.

Will they not help her to rise

If there is death in her eyes?

Can you not see? She made them free.

What if she dies?

Can we not help her? Oh, no! In her good fight it is so That all who work never must shirk Suff'ring and woe.

But she'll not ever lie down — On her head, in the dust, is a crown Jewelled and bright, under whose light She'll rise alone.