

## ZUELLA'S POEMS

Marguerite (Borden) Head, pen name Zuella Sterling, lived in Alpine during two different periods. The first was off-and-on between 1919 and 1929. During part of this time she served as Alpine Librarian. The second period was from 1950 to 1953 when she lived in a cabin near Percy and Bertha Foss. She was bestowed the honor of Poet Laureate of New Hampshire (plaque in her honor displayed at the New Hampshire pavilion in the 1939 World Fair, New York).

The following 15 poems out of hundreds she wrote are listed in chronological order (compiled by her grandson, Kenneth Schulte, October 2009 & January 2010).

*St. Nicholas* (a magazine for children)

Conducted /edited by Mary Mapes Dodge, author of Hans Brinker or The Silver Skates.

Vol. XXXI, Part II, May 1904 to Oct. 1904, The Century Co., NY.

P. 664, The Seaweed Nest

P. 946, Dreams

### **The Seaweed Nest**

By Marguerite Borden (age 17)

The little mer-babies who lived in the sea  
Are just as happy as happy can be;  
For they laugh and frolic in childish glee,  
And when they are tired away they swim  
To a coral tree, and there on a limb  
The sleepy babies can peacefully rest  
In a dear little, pink little seaweed nest.

The sea-babies can play with the snails,  
Or ride on the backs of the largest whales;  
They can hunt for fishes with shining scales,  
Or gently float on the silvery waves,  
Or dive for crabs in the deep-sea caves;  
But the cozy nook that the babes like best  
Is a dear little, pink little seaweed nest.

### **Dreams**

(Ole Mammy's Lullaby)

By Marguerite Borden (age 17, Estero, Lee County, Fla.)

(*Gold Badge* prize winner)

HUSH-A-BABY, hush-a-baby, by, by, by;  
Big roun' yaller moon's a-shinin' in de sky;  
Everything's a-sleeping jes as still as still,  
'Cept a bird a singin' fo' to whip po' Will.

Hush-a-baby, hush-a-baby, by, by, by;  
Lots o' li'l' skeery dreams comin' ef yo' cry!  
All de naughty chil'uns sees de bogie-man  
Comin' fo' to ketch 'em, take 'em ef he can!

Hush-a-baby, hush-a-baby, by, by, by;  
Grea' white hobble-gobble git yo' ef yo' cry;  
Snatch yo' froo de windah sprier 'an de cat-  
Up yo' go a -flyin' on de ole black bat.

Hush-a-baby, hush-a-baby, by, by, by;  
Ef yo' good, ma honey, neber, neber cry,  
Yo'll see watermillions hangin' on de vine,  
Waitin' to be eaten, settin' in a line!  
Piccaninny, piccaninny, by, by, by;  
Chile, yo' min' yo'  
mammy—don't yer  
cry, cry, cry!

*The Granite Monthly*, (A New Hampshire Magazine), 1910, Concord, N.H., Vol. 42, Rumford Press.

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### **The Master-Architect**

By Marguerite Borden

All life puts forth an effort to construct.  
Who hath not watched the spider spin her web,  
And marveled at its geometric plan?  
But is it *strange* that she should weave her tent  
Of silver lace in pattern most ornate?  
For *choice* is lacking in her tiny brain.  
She follows the one dictate she was taught;  
The kind Creator saw and filled her need.  
So it is with each insect, bird and beast.  
But man—"proud man"—the great Creator blest,  
And placed within *him liberty of choice*  
To build his home howe'er he might devise,  
And any suited substance utilize.  
Oh man, whom wise Jehovah thus hath graced,  
Behold the universe—its wondrous form—  
The majesty of earth and sea and sky.

Built by Him who “breathed the breath of life”—  
Shaped all in loveliness, yet all for use.  
Make thou, O man, thy dwellings more divine;  
Tear down the huts that gasp for light and air;  
Destroy the crude and darkened tenements,  
And raze to earth thy black and monstrous tow’rs—  
Ten thousand Babels that shut out the sun—  
And boast not of thy engineering skill  
Till on those ruins thou hast built anew  
Cities whose white and spotless domes shall be  
Equal in beauty and utility.

### **The Little Black Cat**

By Marguerite Borden

Dear little cat with yellow eyes  
That cocked her head and looked so wise!  
What if her fur had turned to brown?—  
She was the oldest cat in town.  
From fond friends do you turn away  
Because they’re wrinkled, old, or gray?  
Rather dingy she looked, ‘tis true,  
But what are *looks* when one can do?  
A huntress she, of ancient fame,  
Who never failed to “bag” her game.  
And oft her game, to our surprise,  
Was of a most prodigious size;  
And such great distance did she roam  
She scarce had strength to drag it home.

She’d catch a rabbit, rat, or snake,  
And give them each their final shake,  
But would not eat—not e’en a mouse,—  
Till she had brought them to the house  
For approbation’s recompense,  
Or for her family’s maintenance.  
Year after year she chose her nest—  
A place that kittens like the best—  
In the big barn’s sweet-scented hay,  
The very nicest place to play.  
But when the earth was white with snow,  
And wintry winds began to blow,  
Beside the stove she sat and purred,  
So eager for a look or word.  
Ah, little cat we loved so well!

Strange are the stories Time can tell!  
How long ago now seems the day  
Since from our home you went away!  
Yes, little cat, and others too,  
Have gone, and not returned, like you:  
No voices answer to my call;  
No flowers bloom inside the wall;  
The birds from their high homes have flown—  
Bereaved, bare branches wail and moan,  
And murmur'ring Nature's mournful tone  
Says to my soul that I'm alone.

### **Lines at Sunset**

By Marguerite Borden

The sun-God's fiery beauty slowly waned,  
Though still he wore his raiment crimson stained.  
In majesty descending from the sky—  
Yet loath to leave his golden throne on high,  
He paused, and gazed upon the ocean clear  
To view his brilliant image mirrored there;  
Then seemingly he turned some magic key  
And entered through the portals of the sea.  
With Sol in Neptune's mansion safe concealed,  
His rival, Luna, with her scepter wield,  
And for a time usurp the Sun-god's throne,  
Until the monarch shall regain his own.  
But ere night's queen in splendor holds her sway  
The twilight spirit, Vesper, wends her way  
To clothe the rosy clouds in mantles gray,  
Like somber heralds of a dying day.

The publication, if any, for the following poem is unknown.

### **Within the Silence**

Within the silence of thy quiet room--  
On sun-kissed mountain or in forest's gloom--  
Where throbbing waters stretch from shore to shore,  
Or in the garden by thy cottage door,  
Sit thou, full-conscious, and with soul serene  
List for the voices of thy friends unseen;  
Expect not sounds for thy external ear,  
But tune thy mind that thou high thoughts may hear;

Thy mind sends thought, and can as well receive  
The thoughts and visions unseen friends may weave;  
    It costs thee nothing--wait in prayerful mood,  
    And God's own voice may break thy solitude.

Copyright 1918 -- Marguerite Head.

*The Granite Monthly* (A New Hampshire Magazine), September 1925, Concord, N.H.  
Vol. 57, No. 9, P. 322

**New Hampshire in the Fall**  
By Zuella Sterling

When the chestnut burs lie scattered  
    Through the woodland's fragrant hall,  
And the frost enwraps the hillsides  
    Like a silver-spangled shawl,  
    The full autumn moon's high glory  
    Tells again the mystic story  
Of my Native state, New Hampshire, in the fall.

Frisky breezes shake the corn stacks;  
    Flocks of black crows caw and call,  
As if shouting invitations  
    To the merry, harvest ball,  
    Where the pumpkin, vivid yellow,  
    And the ruddy apple, mellow,  
Lend their festive decoration in the fall.

Oh, the leaves are bright confetti  
    Showered down by giants tall,  
While the woodbine lights red fire  
    On some weather-beaten wall—  
    So forever I'll remember,  
Of my native state, New Hampshire, in the fall.

An Anthology of New Hampshire Poetry, 1938,  
New Hampshire Federation of Women's Clubs  
The Clarke Press, Manchester, NH.  
With this poem Zuella shares pages with Robert Frost, another NH poet.  
*Zuella Sterling*

## NEW HAMPSHIRE TRAILS

The mountains call the river  
and the river seeks the sea,  
And granite hills forever  
call in whispered tones to me.  
The lakes are flashing jewels  
that reflect the sunlit sky;  
The wild birds love the birches  
where the wood-winds pause to sigh;  
Through the pale green leaves of springtime,  
the hermit thrushes sing,  
And golden-throated orioles  
their songs to heaven fling.  
The splendor of the wilderness  
still lives for him who walks  
With Nature's God, and learns to read  
the romance of the rocks.

Go forth and shout in autumn  
O ye balsam-scented gales,  
Of peaks that burn with beauty  
on the great New Hampshire trails;  
Of trees that wear their crimson  
like a coat-of-arms of old;  
Of trees that dress in garments  
trimmed with rose and green and gold.  
The Old Man of the Mountain stands  
with weather-beaten face,  
While far beneath, the fairy ferns  
are gowned in creamy lace.  
The splendor of the wilderness  
still lives for him who walks  
With Nature's God, and learns to read  
the romance of the rocks.

*--The Christian Science Monitor.*

*The New Hampshire Troubadour, July 1940:*

## **WHERE THE EARTH AND HEAVEN MEET**

by Zuella Sterling

Far beyond the haste of harshness  
Of the clanging city street,  
Is a place where God and nature  
Form a harmony complete.  
Oh, the fields are fresh and holy  
And the wood winds, wild and sweet,  
Blow around the home of childhood  
Where the earth and heaven meet.  
To my heart the hills are calling  
Like a voice from far away,  
And I long for rest and freedom  
From the tasks that bid me stay.  
Oh, the grass on lonely summits  
Is a boon to weary feet,  
And I long for time to tarry  
Where the earth and heaven meet.

--Concord Monitor [original printing]

From "Wings of Song" printed in the Concord Monitor  
About 1940, by Zuella Sterling.

### **The Church Sublime**

A single vast cathedral of our time  
Was formed before the Christ of Galilee.  
Surviving centuries, this church sublime  
Still stands, a type of immortality.  
Three hundred feet and more the steeples rise,  
While open windows, wrought in living green,  
Let golden rays of heaven emphasize  
A ministration from the realms unseen.

An edifice not made by hands, but blest  
Like holy seraphs, through unnumbered days  
A temple thronged by Indians of the West,  
Where Spanish Padres knelt in silent praise:  
Huge redwood trees grown up on hallowed sod  
Became this great cathedral built by God.

**The Christmas Tree of Long Ago** (printed in green ink on cards)

By Zuella Sterling

Date unknown (1940-1949?)

The Christmas tree of long ago  
Had oranges for colored balls,  
And cotton batting spread like snow-  
Without electric folde-rols.

Our sparkling “diamond dust” lent sheen  
Across the batting’s frosty white,  
And lights that flamed from kerosene  
Made paper chains look rainbow bright.

Old candy wrappers gave a glow  
Of tinsel stars and silver moons,  
While strings of popcorn, row on row,  
Were spiraled round in long festoons.

Our thick, black stockings always bulged  
With apples, jumping-jacks and toys  
That made us dance as we indulged  
In little shrieks of happy noise.

At nine o’clock we said our prayers,  
Gave graciously the goodnight kiss,  
And crept, like tired mice, upstairs,  
And slept like angels filled with bliss.

Will boys and girls be glad this year  
With countless modern things that please,  
As we, whose simple gifts seemed dear  
On queer, old-fashioned Christmas trees?

The following four poems (under the pen name Zuella Sterling) are from the book: Wild Grape Brew, an anthology, 1951, from Chaparral Poets of the Santa Barbara Chapter of California Federation of Chaparral Poets. “Manuelita” is the widow of Zuella’s son, Norman Head.

**BRIDGES**

I am a lover of beautiful bridges  
Spanning great waterways, mountains and ridges.  
These shall inspire my ardent endeavor  
To cross over chasms with courage forever.  
Brown, covered bridges are hooded demurely



To keep out the rain and the hail most securely.  
Curious bridges with ancient gray stones  
Tell us of strength in stentorian tones:  
Builders developed their graceful old art  
Called forth by sentiment straight from the heart.  
Japanese bridges are rounded like bows  
Set over brooks near camellia and rose.  
Bridges the Romans built, standing today—  
Arches and keystones constructed to stay—  
Look picturesque where the barges once rolled.  
Bridges of iron are bony and bold.  
I have loved bridges where streams with a song  
Sing through the centuries, laughing along.  
Bridges that shout, with a modern elation,  
Of trestle and ugliness, viaduct, station,  
Serve a good purpose for rumble and duty;  
But I have loved bridges with keystones and beauty:  
Bridges that symbolize structures more splendid  
waiting our footsteps when earth-life has ended.

## **REVENGE**

The swarm of bees is like a big, brown bell  
Suspended from the tall, white lilac bush—  
Yet I would not provoke the fires of Hell  
By giving that brown form one tiny push.  
Should I attempt a little, spiteful shove  
With firm, deliberate, pugilistic hands,  
The bell would shatter, bees would lose their love  
Of peace, and flaunt their stings like fiery brands.

Now they are peaceful, let me, too, find peace.  
The motionless brown shape, once filled with life,  
Now is still and dormant to increase  
The strength of comradeship, not strife.  
Love is a power if held inviolate.  
Anger would stir the torpid bees to hate.

## **SONNET FOR MANUELITA**

Along the shore the tide comes rolling in  
Bringing its gift of tiny, tinted shells,  
Crying aloud above the roar and din,  
"I love you!" to the listening hills and dells.

The valiant, rough sea-captain who has found  
Beauty among the green, unfathomed waves,  
Adores the ocean's clear, deliberate sound  
On lonely coves near glistening crystal caves.

The jewels and adornments in his home  
Surround his bride with wealth from foreign lands,  
But she sees only miles of moving foam  
That call with Ocean's resolute commands.  
She hears the sea that keeps their souls apart,  
She hears the wild, deep longing in her heart.

### **CONCERNING BOOKS**

“Our books are friends,” my mother mused,  
“If they are clean and not abused,  
Do not deface them, crease a page,  
Or torture them until they rage  
At their discomfort when their backs  
Are broken and their binding cracks.

Give only kindness to each friend,  
Preserve with Love and never lend.  
A man who might purloin your book  
Would blush if he were called a crook.  
A book-thief is a dunder-pate  
Police do not incarcerate!”

I have one other of Grandmother's poems so I may as well type that one too. It's from the New Hampshire Troubadour, July 1940:

### **WHERE THE EARTH AND HEAVEN MEET**

by Zuella Sterling

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Is a place where God and nature  
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To my heart the hills are calling  
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--Concord Monitor