



*Three poems by Elinor Wylie*

• ESCAPE •

When foxes eat the last gold grape,  
and the last white antelope is killed,  
I shall stop fighting and escape  
into a little house I'll build.

But first I'll shrink to fairy size,  
with a whisper no one understands,  
making blind moons of all your eyes,  
and muddy roads of all your hands.

And you may grope for me in vain  
in hollows under the mangrove root,  
or where, in apple-scented rain,  
the silver wasp-nests hang like fruit.

• VILLAGE MYSTERY •

The woman in the pointed hood  
and cloak blue-grey like a pigeon's wing,  
whose orchard climbs to the balsam-wood,  
has done a cruel thing.

To her back door-step came a ghost,  
a girl who had been ten years dead,  
she stood by the granite hitching-post  
and begged for a piece of bread.

Now why should I, who walk alone,  
who am ironical and proud,  
turn, when a woman casts a stone  
at a beggar in a shroud?

I saw the dead girl cringe and whine,  
and cower in the weeping air —  
but, oh, she was no kin of mine,  
and so I did not care!

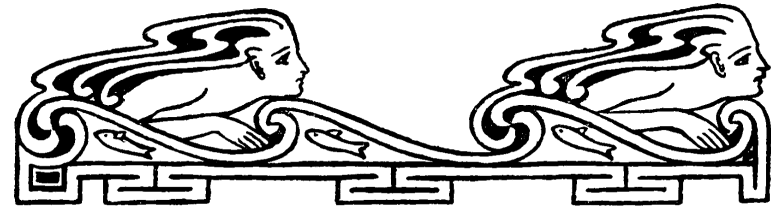


• MADMAN'S SONG •

Better to see your cheek grown hollow,  
better to see your temple worn,  
than to forget to follow, follow,  
after the sound of a silver horn.

Better to bind your brow with willow  
and follow, follow until you die,  
than to sleep with your head on a golden pillow,  
nor lift it up when the hunt goes by.

Better to see your cheek grown sallow  
and your hair grown grey, so soon, so soon,  
than to forget to hallo, hallo,  
after the milk-white hounds of the moon.



The wild-wood creature with its deadly foe following tireless on the trail scent, realizes its nearing doom and feels an awful spell. Its strength is spent, its every trick is tried in vain till the good Angel leads it to the water, the running, living water, and dashing in it follows the cooling stream, and then with force renewed — takes to the woods again.

There is magic in running water. The hounds come to the very spot and halt and cast about; and halt and cast in vain. Their spell is broken by the merry stream, and the wild thing lives its life.

— *Wild Animals I Have Known* by Ernest Thompson Seton