

To Sally Walker, from the Poet of the Dunes

~~Dear Sally,~~xx
To little brown Sally
With the mother-kind eyes:
May life always bring you
Its glad surprise,-
And the Paradise earned
By the innocent-wise.

Dear Sally, goodbye;
Go back home feeling glad
That with bright sea and sky
A fine summer you 've had.

And re-join us, next year,
To play on the beach
Where, to tickle your toes
The waves' fingers will reach!

signed with a seagull's feather,

Harry Kemp
Aug. 30th 1950
The Dunes

The Dedicated Day

I will make bright use of this day
With all the vigor I may -
Of this day so brightly begun
And full of the youth of the sun:
I will do the greatest I can
To fulfill the stature of man
That the poor, little ghosts of the Past
May all be banished at last!

Harry Kemp

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The Dunes

Back from the wave-carved ramparts of the sunbeach
 Skyward the grey, enormous sand-dunes reach
 Stippled with far-seen trails of wandering feet
 That walk up distant summits, cross, and meet
 And merge into the road where lies the town
 On the small ships of which the dunes look down:
 A jumble of sails and cluttered wharves and ropes
 Shelved in a vista of gigantic slopes
 Shining and sparkling in the burning sun...

The sand fleas, helter-skelter, skurry and run
 And tumble, pick-a-back; the blown grass swerves
 Circling its base with graceful sweeps and curves
 And arcs traced, delicate, which winds confer
 Like an invisible geometer.

The ancient ocean, refluxent on the shore,
 Hurls, and draws back with a re-gathering roar
 Its kelp and smooth-worn pebbles...

to and fro,
 Shuttling their legs, the little shore-birds go
 Following the shining foot of every wave.
 Their hunger lifts their hearts and makes them brave.

The close, warm, salty odor of the sea,
 Sweet as a woman's breasts, weighs heavily
 On all the air...

and now the sun goes down,
 Laying its brightness on the seaward town
 A farewell space, as parting lovers meet...

White-purple shadows steal on crowding feet
 Over the brown kelp, up the slopes that lean

Poem
 Read at
 The Camp
 fire
 in the
 dunes

The Dunes

Skyward... they touch the firs to darker green,
 Into black-green: space grows to infinite height
 And leads up into avenues of night
 From the abrupt ~~xxxxxxx~~foot of the dunes, that seem
 Causeways that climb the parapets of dream...

A slipping edge of disc, a tiny span,
 Gleams yet, hinting the sun Leviathan;
 And where the west burns like a brazier yet
 Dance small, grey fisher boats in silhouette.

The first great planet of the night hangs low,
 So bright it makes our shadows as we go:
 Each gulping hollow is a haunted dell;

Now the moon, risen, casts a silver spell
 In a long ocean-path... has a god passed
 Leaving a visible way? the dunes are vast
 With moonlight; every ridge, by magic, grown
 A mountain under stars...

the soul 's alone,
 Whipped from the body to a stellar birth
 Upon another landscape (not the earth)
 Banked as with solid moonlight...

that 's our moon
 That was our earth...we walk a plenilune
 The sea is rolling silver tossed a-far...
 We walk upon the body of a star.

 Mary Kemp

Wind of Change

There was a wind rose over-nights:

Each wave became a burnished height,
Then fell to silver befor it brake
In tufts of lapis lazuli smoke.
The tasselled dune-grass blew oblique;
Upon the dunes' remotest peak
I saw the grey sands scurry and run
Scattering diamonds in the sun.

My shack, that holds my books and me,
Grew like a ship that walks the sea:
I quite forgot I had been born
Before this bright, tumultuous morn:
I put all other days behind
And joined the forthright, voyaging wind.

You Wind of Change upon the world,
Bright gust from Man's infinity,
Let all the old, drear things be hurled
Clean from the earth; You Wind, blow free
The sick distrusts, the vampire ill
That stalks the embattled nations still!
Bring fresher breaths of life to range:
Become a whole world's Wind of Change!

Harry Kemp

For Phillip and Ruth

A Few Rhymes Over The Cocktails
(For Phillip and Ruth's Party)

Only enough for the brightening of wits,
So that upon the brow no anger sits,
A darkening cloud to put us ill-at-ease;
Anger and quarrels are the mind's disease;*
Just enough to free us from small cares,
But not enough to drive us to our prayers;
Just enough to achieve a generous glow,
And to assure us all good things are so;
With merry talk and story, humorous quip
And all belonging to good-fellowship:
But if we cannot these just bounds ~~contain~~ ^{maintain} —
Why, then, "the art of arts is, - to refrain!" *

Harry Kemp

* Anger is the mind's disease - Sir William Davenant

* The Art of Arts is to refrain - Sir William Watson

Harry Kemp

Peaks Hill
Bill Bars
Sept-6th
1952

Drumwater
Sept 24 to 25 2

For Philly and Ruth - in return
for bringing my oil-stove over the
dunes in their Jeep.

Last Scene

(Shakespeare's Death-Bed; as reported by Michael Drayton, a contemporary
Poet, and his friend)

I saw a sailor die, once, safe a-shore;
His heart's last efforts led him to believe
Him hauling at the ropes, climbing the shrouds;
(So men's last acts bespeak their fondest hopes).
The coverlet he clutched, and not the ropes;
His bed, a ship in storm; its canopy, clouds,-
And in his ears he held the tempest's roar
(Could it be so life's dreams ourselves deceive?)

So Shakespeare died. But Shakespeare felt a pen,
His favorite, oft-pruned quill, within his hand.
He wrote imaginary lines on air
While his immortal stage o'erflowed again
With all those characters so true and rare
That only he had at his great command.

Harry Kemp

Harry Kemp



Mayflower 1620

From Provincetown -- Where The Pilgrims First Landed -- November 21, 1620

Harry Kemp
President

William H. Hathaway
Vice President

Polly Young
Secretary

Hawthorne Bissell
Treasurer

Anthony Russell
Captain

Provincetown Pilgrims Association

230 Bradford Street -- Provincetown, Massachusetts

EST. NOVEMBER 1948

The Pilgrims on the Mayflower

There is nothing better in this human life
 Than the thirst for great, clear action; daring all,
 Expending all beyond the petty rounds
 Of half-mechanic being: to take a ship
 And seek out unknown lands, leaving the little
 Comforts that teach the heart a humdrum beat!
 Of all the adventures that stir the blood and wake
 The soul, the Pilgrims chose the greatest one,
 Leaving their surety of daily bread,
 The security of roofs to shelter them;
 In a small ship crowded with venturers
 Daring the waves and storms; the unknown perils
 Of the wilderness: her^e to build for themselves
 And for their childrens' children after them
 A Commonwealth more to the soul's desire!

~~signed with a seagull's feather.~~

signed with a seagull's feather,

Harry Kemp

For Ruth Walker

Last Word

The Captain who puts boldly out to sea
And does not skirt the cowardly coast, has led
Ever, Man's long advance: speak not to me
Of cautious charts and old men's proverbs said
To drag against the soaring ecstasy.
Without God's fools, where would the Present be?
Bridegrooms who took Disaster to their bed
And gave the world a golden progeny!

To woo Destruction with so fair a face
Is better than to rot in one sure place:
Sometimes a Cause is nothing till it 's lost.
For all this soon-dreamed, passing life of ours
And fear of thorns that guard consummate flowers,
Give me the man who does not count the cost!

Harry Kemp

Harry
Kemp

For Ruth Walker

Ocean Birthday

Here, sheltered in no citted, close alcove,
I live, where tides return and gulls wing free:
There is no other place I 'd rather be!
Bright with its fish beneath and bright above
Before my hut the great and glittering sea
Tumultuous with its crisp waves' drove on drove,
Suggests the round world and the night thereof
And dreams against the sky's infinity.

In cities' crowds what can a poet find
So great as this?- clouds, winds, wings drive their way
Above the waves' immense and rapid course!-
One gift I crave: to keep a morning mind
Brimmed with the first touch of the ocean's day
And strong as with its world-embracing force!

Harry Kemp

signed with a seagull's feather

For Ruth, on her
early visit

Eight Lines for The New Year

Hope can widen any street,

Love can clear the darkest blame,

And where honest spirits meet

Flowers spring that need no name.

Summer's blossoms spring and fade,

But the flowers of human trust

Are of such a substance made

That they never fall to dust!

compliments of the Provincetown Publishers

and

Harry Kemp

signed with a seagull's
feather

Dear Ruth:

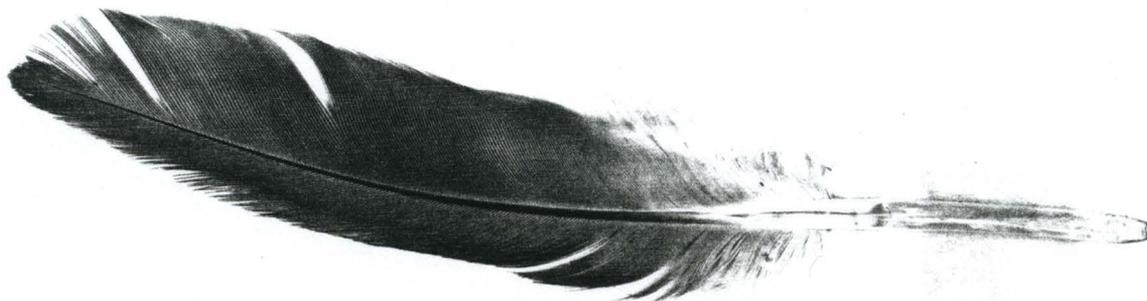
My summer has gone on into the Fall;
It 's just as if it had not gone at all:
The sky suffused with brightness, and the sea,
Striking a thousand sparkles mightily.

A place fit for a poet's best endeavor
This is the kind of life I want forever:

space by geographies and long dune days
With millions of stars on their allotted ways
At night, - and waves where comic porpoises roll:
It good for body, both, and for man's soul.

faithfully signed with my seagull's
feather,

Harry Kemp



Sept 1948

HOT SUMMER DAY

Heretics from history and tonight,
We strip ourselves to scarlet noon, to Now.
The moment is all, and all is valueless;
Diamonds glitter as glass, gold screams everywhere.
The sun bleeds us dry, we lie and watch
Our clever toes crumble in sand, our sowing fingers
Vanish.

So lie and stare, unmoved by memory or fear,
Flick off the buzzing future, and stone to the drowner's cry
See the swimming ego thrashless flung up on the shore.

Eve Meriam

© June 21 June, 1948.