

## A Lyric

by William Wilfred Campbell (1860-1918)

[adapted by Gwyneth Walker]

I would bring you a song, O lakes:  
A song of delight and desire;  
A song of the spring that wakes,  
Of the warm red light that shakes  
Far over your white ice-pyre.

I would breathe you a song, O lakes;  
A song of the love that thrills  
The heart of the year, and breaks  
The bonds of winter, and eases  
The thirst of the season in tiny little streams and rills.

I would breathe you a song, O lakes;  
And the bountiful answer you give, O lakes;  
And the love and the music it wakes  
Entrances my spirit and makes  
Me thankful to God that I live!

## By Blue Ontario's Shore (A Vision of Democracy)

by Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

adapted by Gwyneth Walker

By blue Ontario's shore,  
As I mused on these troubled days,  
and of peace returned,  
a Phantom large and superb, with stern appearance,  
came to me...

"Oh, sing me a song, a song that comes from the soul of America.  
Sing me the carol of victory.  
And sing me the song of the birth of Democracy."

Rochester... Niagara... Syracuse... Oswego...

A nation announcing itself – we are the most beautiful to ourselves, and in ourselves.

Democracy, I saw you serenely give birth to immortal children, saw in dreams your  
fullness form, saw you with spreading mantle covering the world.

Rochester...Niagara...Syracuse...Oswego...

I stand for those who walk with the whole earth,  
who celebrate one to celebrate all.

Thus, by blue Ontario's shore,  
While the winds whipped and the waves came trooping toward me,  
I thrilled with the song of liberty, and the charm of my theme was upon me...

I saw the free souls of poets,  
the loftiest bards of ages past strode before me,

Poets of vision, messengers of peace,  
Bards with songs from burning coals or the lightning's forked stripes!  
Voices of water... Ontario's bards...  
You by my charm I invoke.

Rochester...Niagara...Syracuse...Oswego...

By blue Ontario's shore

## Erie Waters

by Emily Pauline Johnson  
(1861-1913)

A dash of yellow sand,  
Wind-scattered and sun-tanned;  
Some waves that curl and cream along the margin of the strand;  
And, creeping close to these  
Long shores that lounge at ease,  
Old Erie rocks and ripples to a fresh sou'-western breeze.

A sky of blue and grey;  
Some stormy clouds that play  
At scurrying up with ragged edge, then laughing blow away,  
Just leaving in their trail  
Some snatches of a gale;  
To whistling summer winds we lift a single daring sail.

O! wind so sweet and swift,  
O! danger-freighted gift  
Bestowed on Erie with her waves that foam and fall and lift,  
We laugh in your wild face,  
And break into a race  
With flying clouds and tossing gulls that weave and interlace.

## Lake Huron (Islands)

Lake Huron, vast and beautiful, dotted with islands large and small, how I love these island names!

*Bear...Birch...Boot...Burke...*

*Cove...Crow...Cockburn...Cranberry...*

*Devil...Dollar...Doctor...Great Duck...*

*Middle Duck...Western Duck...Outer Duck...*

*duck...duck...duck... duck...*

*Goat...Goose...Gull Rock...Garden...*

*Herschel...Haven...Indian...ISLAND NUMBER 8!!!*

*Kitchener...Kolfage...Little Kitchener...Lonely Island...*

*Main Station...Manitoulin...McCallum...Marquette (a VERY LARGE ISLAND)...*

*Perseverance...Penny...Russell...Rover...*

*Smokehouse...South Otter...*

*Thibault...Turning...Tyson...Vimy...*

*Yeo!*

And my favorite is:

*BEAR'S RUMP ISLAND!*

## Songs from the Shore (Lake Michigan)

by Carl Sandburg

(1878-1967)

from *Chicago Poems* (1916) and *Smoke and Steel* (1922)

### 1. On The Breakwater

On the breakwater in the summer dark, a man and a girl are sitting,  
She across his knee and they are looking face into face  
Talking to each other without words, singing rhythms in  
silence to each other.

A funnel of white ranges the blue dusk from an outgoing boat,  
Playing its searchlight, puzzled, abrupt, over a streak of green,  
And two on the breakwater keep their silence, she on his knee.

### 2. Flying Fish

I have lived in many half-worlds myself...and so I know you.

I leaned at a deck rail watching a monotonous seas, the same circling birds and  
the same plunge of furrows carved by the plowing keel.

I leaned so...and you fluttered struggling between two waves in the air now  
...and then under the water and out again...a fish...a bird...a fin thing...  
a wing thing.

Child of water, child of air, fin thing and wing thing...I have lived in many  
half-worlds myself...and so I know you.

### 3. Fog

The fog comes  
on little cat feet.

It sits looking  
over harbor and city  
on silent haunches  
and then moves on.

#### 4. From the Shore

A lone gray bird,  
Dim-dipping, far flying,  
Alone in the shadows and grandeurs and tumults  
Of night and the sea  
And the stars and storms.

Out over the darkness it wavers and hovers,  
Out into the gloom it swings and batters,  
Out into the wind and the rain and the vast,  
Out into the pit of a great black world,  
Where fogs are at battle, sky-driven, sea-blown,  
Love of mist and rapture of flight,  
Glories of chance and hazards of death  
On its eager and palpitant wings.

Out into the deep of the great dark world,  
Beyond the long borders where foam and drift  
Of the sundering waves are lost and gone  
On the tides that plunge and rear and crumble.

# Lake Superior

by Samuel Griswold Goodrich  
(1793-1860)

Father of Lakes, your waters bend  
Beyond the eagle's utmost view,  
When, throned in heaven, he sees you send  
Back to the sky its world of blue.

Father of Lakes, Majestic! Lake Superior.

Boundless and deep, your forests weave  
Their twilight shade the borders o'er,  
And rising cliffs, like giants, heave  
Their rugged forms along the shore.

Wave of the wilderness, farewell!  
Farewell to rocks and wilds and deepest wood!  
Roll on, you ageless testament of blue,  
And fill this daily solitude.

Duluth...Thunder Bay...Sault Ste. Marie...Marathon...  
Rossport...Nipigon...Grand Marais...Hiawatha...

Father of Lakes, your waters bend  
Beyond the eagle's utmost view.  
O, radiant gift from heaven sending  
Back to the sky its world of blue.

## Invocation to the Lakes

William Wilfred Campbell  
(1860-1918)  
[adapted by Gwyneth Walker]

I love thee, lakes, and all thy glorious world,  
Blue, wrinkled, mist encircled 'neath the sky.  
And far unto thy realm of waves imperiled  
My heart, like a bird, doth fly.

Thou art to me as love to lover sad,  
As sun to flower, as husband unto wife;  
I think of thee and all the hours are glad,  
And gone are pain and strife.

You come to me as cooling drink to one,  
Hot parched and faint with never-ending thirst;  
My spirit dances on the air and sun,  
Forgets the world is cursed.

You know no hate, no death, no sin, no pain,  
No woeful partings, bitterness and tears;  
But only days that sleep to wake again,  
Across the golden years.

From sky and wave I drink thy nectar sweet,  
From jeweled brim that stars of heaven light,  
When, lo, 'tis Infinite Love my heart shall meet  
On waterbirds in flight.

My heart, like a bird, doth fly!