

Mary Marguerite Beal

(1914-1941)

Unsigned poems found in an old exercise book.

Spring

(Page 1)

Spring is coming, beautiful Spring!
Birds are trilling the news they bring;
Flowers are blooming, trees are green,
Gone is the wind so cold and keen.

Look at the daffodils, bright and gay,
And the birds as on the lawn they play;
A lark is singing up so high,
Right up, right up, in the deep blue sky!



The Four Sisters.

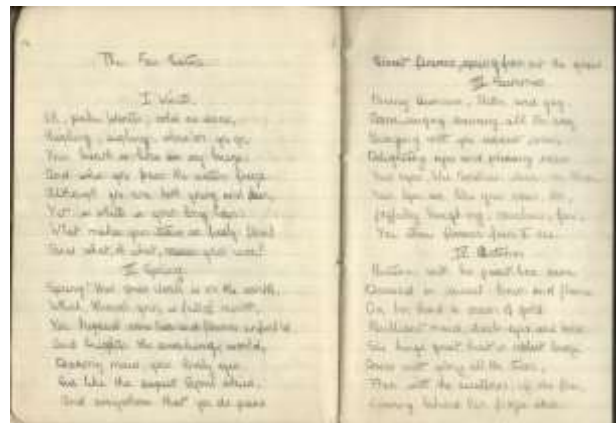
(Page 6 and 7)

1. Winter

Oh, pale Winter, cold as snow,
Sighing, sighing, where'er you go,
Your breath is like an icy breeze,
And when you pass the waters freeze,
Although you are both young and fair,
Yet so white is your long hair!
What makes your tears so freely flow?
And what, oh what, causes your woe?

11. Spring

Spring, your green cloak is on the earth,
Which, through you, is full of mirth,
You kissed some buds and flowers unfurl'd,
And brighten the awaking world,
Dreamy maid, your lovely eyes
Are like the deepest April skies;
And everywhere that you do pass
Sweet flowers spring out the grass.



111. Summer

Merry Summer, blithe and gay,
Come, singing, dancing, all the way,
Bringing with you reddest roses,
Delighting eyes and pleasing noses,
Your eyes, like Southern skies, are blue,
Your lips are like your roses, too,
Joyfully laughing, careless, free,
You strew flowers fair to see.

1V. Autumn

Autumn, with her paint-box came
Dressed in russet-brown and flame
On her head a crown of gold
Brilliant maid, dark-eyed and bold
She brings great heat or coolest breeze,
Covers with glory all the trees,
Then, with the swallows, off she flies,
Leaving behind her frozen skies.

Sunset

(Page 8 and 9)

1.

The sun has set the Thames on fire,
Which brilliantly does glow,
Reflecting many a church's spire
As it does calmly flow.

2.

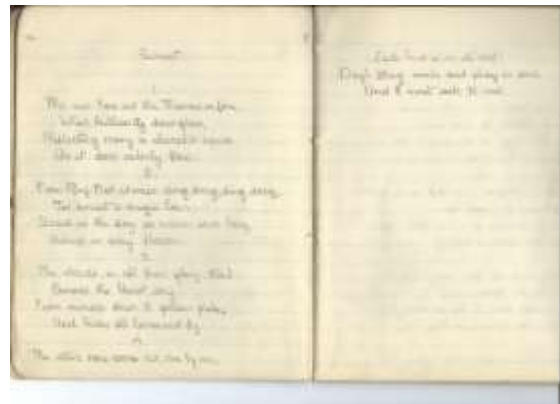
Now Big Ben chimes ding, dong, ding, dong,
'Tis sunset's magic hour;
Closed is the day so warm and long,
Asleep is every flower.

3.

The clouds, in all their glory, trail
Across the bluest sky,
From crimson down to golden pale,
And birds all homewards fly.

4.

The stars now come out, one by one,
Each bird is in its nest;
Day's tiring work and play is done
And I must seek to rest.



Sunrise

(Page 10 and 11)

1.
Come out into the early dawn
And watch the sun arise,
From Beachy Head oh, see this morn
It flush the eastern skies

2.
And see just past the cold grey beach
The sea so calm and mild,
The sun's first rays its wavelets reach
And then the sands do guild

3.
The tiny clouds are edged with pink;
The cliffs gleam white as snow;
They stretch far to the water's brink
Which simmers in the glow.

4.
The sun has risen now quite high;
The birds awake; and hark!
Singing, soaring in the sky
There is an early lark!



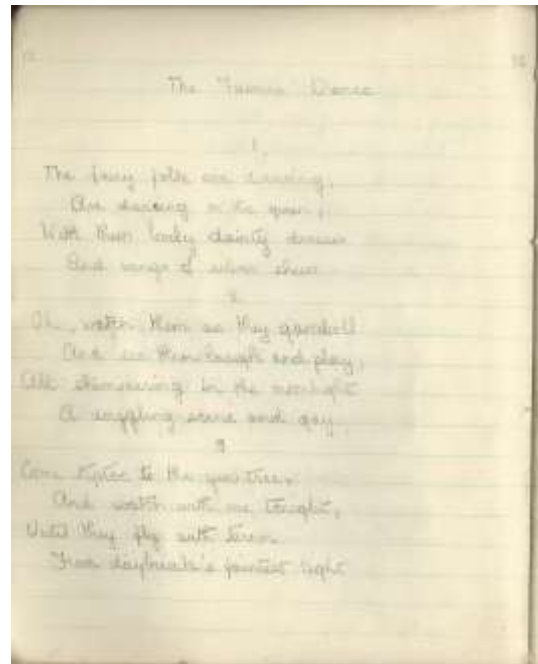
The Fairies' Dance

(Page 12)

1
The fairy folk are dancing,
Are dancing on the green,
With their lovely dainty dresses
And wings of silver sheen.

2
Oh, watch them as they gambol
And see them laugh and play,
All shimmering in the moonlight
A dazzling scene and gay.

3
Come tiptoe to the yew tree,
And watch with me tonight,
Until they fly with terror
From daybreak's faintest light.



Home With the Swallows

(Page 13)

1.

Home with the swallows! From sunny south France,
Home with the swallows! To England perchance
 To the English primrose
To the stream's silver sheen,
And the trees tender green,
 Where the warm west wind blows
So softly.

2.

Home with the swallows! From sunny south France,
Home with swallows! To England perchance
 To a vista of mauve
Of the dog-violets hue
Interspersed with a few
 Of tall ferns treasure trove
So early.



Hope

(Page 14)

1.

Dark, dark, dark, is the cloud of today
Dark as a thunder-cloud,
But thought 'tis pierced by no pale ray
Yet Hope's voice still sounds loud

2.

Black nights come ere the brightest days,
Sable clouds have linings bright
And Hope, sweet angel, always stays
To cheer us when tears dim our sight.



A voice

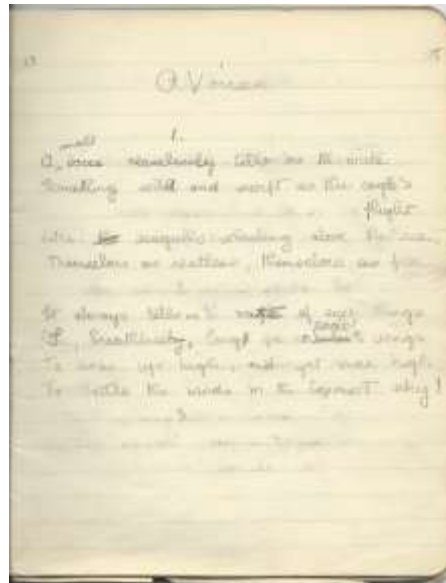
(Page 15)

1

A small voice ceaselessly tells me to write
Something wild and swift as the eagle's flight
Like seagulls wheeling above the sea,
Themselves as restless, themselves as free.

2.

It always tells me to write of such things
I, breathless, long for an eagle's wings
To soar up high, and yet more high,
To battle the winds in the topmost sky!



What Does the Lark Sing?

(Page 16 and 17)

What does the lark sing when he's soaring up so high?
He sings of the early rising sun and the flushed Eastern sky!

He sings :-

"Awake! The Eastern skies are bright
Oh, see the sun's first rays
The earth casts off its cloak of night,
The birds now sing their lays!
Oh! welcome, Sun so warm a bright!
Oh! welcome Sun that gives us light!
Before whose power flees the night,
Welcome!"



What does the lark sing when he's soaring up so high?
He sings of the grass and flowers and the deep blue of the sky!

He sings :-

"Oh! The sky is the deepest blue
And the grass is a vivid green,
Butterflies of every hue,
And lovely flowers are seen!
Oh! Welcome, Sun so warm and bright!
Oh! welcome, Sun that gives us light!
Everything smiles in your light!
Welcome!"

A Fear in Downland

(Page 18 and 19)

I lay upon the green turf of the Downs
Forgetful of the dust and strife of towns
And all around was sun-drenched, golden, fair.
The drone of insects filed the drowsy air;
The incense of warm grass, the cloudless sky,
The rasping song of grasshoppers nearby,
The heady scent of gorse, its blazing gold,
A dreamy spell around me seem'd to fold,
For peace breath'd through each sight and scent and sound.
But footsteps told me my retreat was found;
The hazy spell was broken; passing near,
Two voices spoke of war, harsh, grim with fear.
They faded, died; and now my dreams are dead;
Where is the glory that the sun had shed?
The downlands still are fair, but for how long?
Will man destroy their beauty, drown their song?
Oh, Downs! Will you be blacken'd, scarred with shell,
Will your sweet peace become a man-made Hell,
Your eerie mists be yet more eerie still,
Bring choking death to every lung they fill,
And with grim red replace the crystal dew?
Downs! Will the fate of Flanders fall on you?
Listen! A silver note – a lark's long trill –
Are thund'rous guns and screaming shells to kill
A bird's sweet song? No cause can justify
A war in which all beauty, hope, and guiltless youth shall die.



Transmutation

(Page 20)

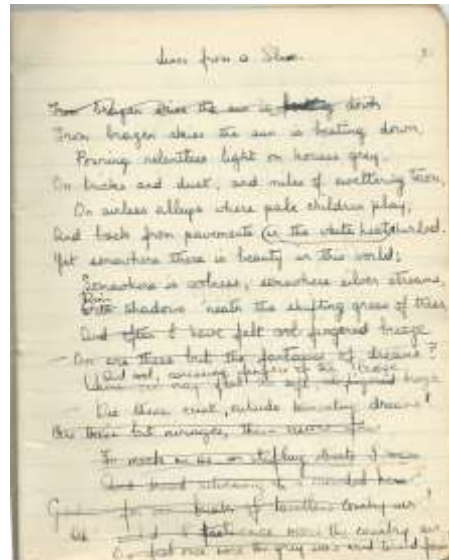
From this drab office in my mind I pass
To where the wind is soughing through long grass
Clatter of letter'd keys is in my ears,
Transmuted by my thoughts to rush of weirs,
And happy song of birds; for in my memory dwells
A store of peaceful scenes, green, lonely, still,
As cool to thirsting mind as water from deep wells,
To be drawn upon at will.



Lines from a slum

(Page 21)

From brazen skies the sun is beating down,
Powering relentless light on houses grey,
On bricks and dust, and miles of sweltering town,
On airless alleys where pale children play;
And back from pavements the white heat is hurled.
Yet somewhere there is beauty in this world;
Somewhere is coolness, somewhere silver streams,
Dim shadows 'neath the shifting green of trees,
And cool, caressing fingers of the breeze
Do these exist, outside tormenting dreams?



For a good and omnipotent God

(Page 22)

For a good and omnipotent God
Your plans have gone sadly astray
If all-powerful truly you are
Then whence holds the devil such sway?

Or if good, then how come to be
The fears and the sorrows of man?
And does it not grieve you to see
How fails your benevolent plan?

Oh God, much maligned you must be
A strange inconsistency's here;
Perhaps good, or almighty you are,
You cannot be both, it is clear.

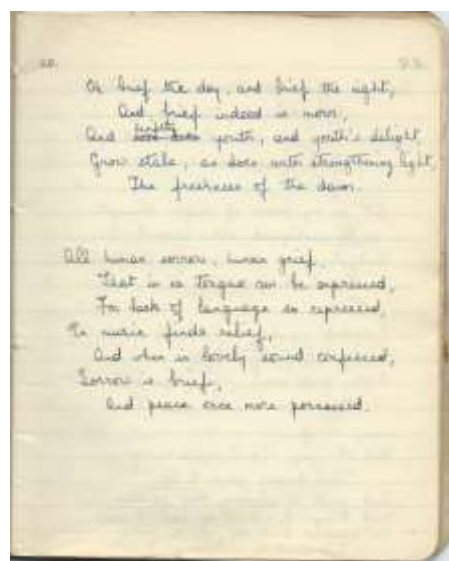


Oh brief the day, and brief the night

(Page 23)

Oh brief the day, and brief the night,
And brief indeed is morn,
And swiftly youth, and youth's delight,
Grow stale, as does with strengthening light,
The freshness of the dawn.

All human sorrow, human grief,
That in no tongue can be expressed,
For lack of language so repressed,
In music finds relief,
And when in lovely sound confessed,
Sorrow is brief,
And peace once more possessed.



Oh! office hours are dull and slow
(Page 24)

Oh, office hours are dull and slow
But every day must die,
And when at last I'm free to go
Full weary then am I.

Yet in my heart of eager strength
An untapped store have I;
But it seems enough at length
For lack of use to die.

I spend my days with dusty files
And buzzing telephone,
I tap out words o'er paper miles –
'Tis cowardice to moan –

But oh, my life I waste away
This dreary work to do,
And youth is passing day by day,
And though I search as best I may
No purpose find my life to sway
But much its uselessness I rue.



We, who the pavements are thronging
(Page 25)

We, who the pavements are thronging,
We, to the cities belonging,
In our hearts have a passionate longing
For a beauty that never has been.

Thought the city has trapped us and bound us,
And in sordid, grey streets you have found us,
In our thoughts only green fields surround us,
And a county that no man has seen.

Through the meadows of sweet-smelling clover
Or by pools that the willows hang over,
In his heart every man is a rover;
For the land of his longing is green.

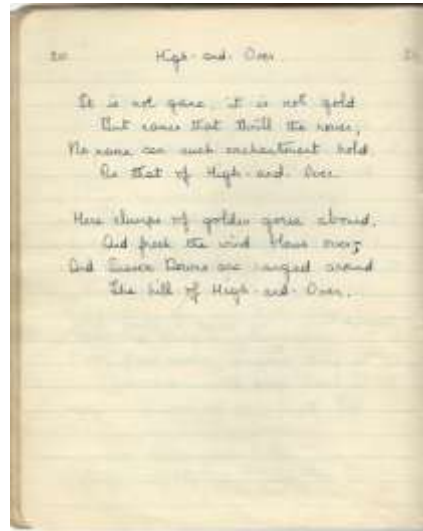


High-and-Over

(Page 26)

It is not game, it is not gold
But names that thrill the rover;
No name can such enchantment hold,
As that of High-and-Over.

Here clumps of golden gorse abound,
And fresh the wind blows over,
And Sussex Downs are ranged around
The hill of High-and-Over.



Gorse

(Page 28)

Along the green arms of the downlands lying,
A golden splendour spilling down the slopes,
A scented loveliness to set us sighing
And fill us with dim longings and doomed hopes,
The gorse now covers every downland fold
With riches that are only for the eye;
And lavishly displays deceitful gold,
A spurious wealth that has no power to buy
More than brief joy. Oh, gold, if you were gold,
Not merely seeming,
Dull eyes would shine and cowardly hearts grow bold
For half our dreaming
Gold is the key
That would unlock the longed reality,
Beauty alone is all unsatisfying
And like that yellow flower will soon be dying



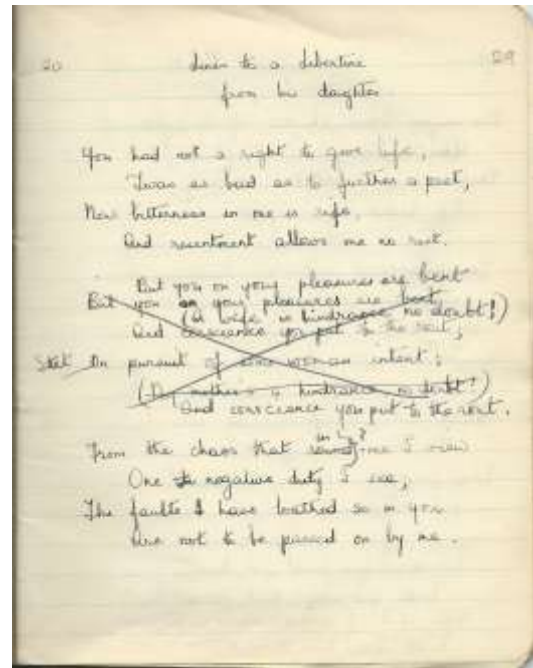
Lines to a Libertine from his daughter.

(Page 29)

You had not a right to give life;
 'Twas as bad as to further a pest;
Now bitterness in me is rife,
 And resentment allows me no rest.

But you on your pleasures are bent
(A wife is hindrance no doubt!)
And conscience you put to the rout;
On pursuit of some woman intent;
(My mother's a hindrance no doubt!)
And conscience you put to the rout.

From the chaos that in me I view
 One negative duty I see,
The faults I have loathed so in you
 Are not to be passed on by me.



Memories at Dusk

(Page 30 and 31)

The vague blue shades of twilight
 Are deep'ning on the plain,
The warm air sets him thinking
 Of India once again.

The pine-clad hills of Murree,
 The Himalayan range,
The marshes of Orissa,
 Fierce heat and customs strange;

That red-stoned ruined city,
 That near to Agra lies
The juggernaut, the jungle,
 He stirs and faintly sighs.

On these his mind is dwelling
 With yearning that is pain,
The spell of India binds him
 Will draw him there again.

The random memories stir him
 Of scenes that once he saw;
Remembering well the beauty
 He can recall no flaw.



All the day the English meadows
Had lain in golden haze,
And so the mists of longing
Transform those distant days.

Long Distance Call

(Page 32 and 33)

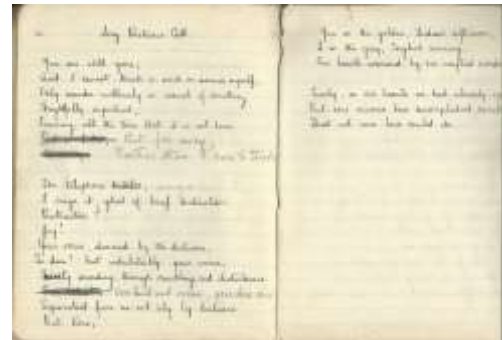
You are still gone,
And I cannot think or work or amuse myself,
Only wander restlessly in search of something
Frightfully important;
Knowing all the time that it is not here
But far away;
Farther than I care to think.

The telephone rings
I seize it, glad of brief distraction.
Distraction?

Joy!
Your voice, dimmed by the distance,
So dim! But indubitably your voice,
Faintly sounding through crackling and disturbance
Over land and ocean, your dear voice
Separated from me not only by distance
But time,

You in the golden, Indian afternoon,
I in the grey, English morning,
Our hearts warmed by our wafted words.

Surely, in our hearts we had already spoken;
But now science has accomplished something
That not even love could do.



The Drum

(Page 34)

Once from the throng of dancers,
We slipped out, you and I,
Into the cool garden;
Wandering away until the music faded
And we could only hear the insistent drum
That beat – that throbbed –
Like the pulse of hot desire.

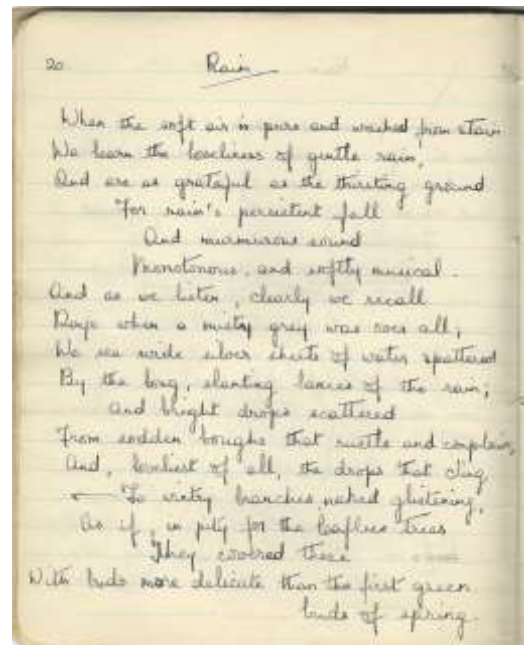
Now I, alone,
Can hear the band play faintly and afar,
Harsh-seeming, joyless music;
And the drum beats still,
Beats on the wincing air,
Throbs through the wakeful night;
Through the weary night
Throbs like a wound.



Rain

(Page 36)

When the soft air is pure and washed from stain
We learn the loveliness of gentle rain,
And we are grateful as the thirsting ground
 For rain's persistent fall
 And murmurous sound
 Monotonous, and softly musical.
And as we listen, clearly we recall
Days when a misty grey was over all;
We see wide silver sheets of water spattered
By the long, slanting lances of the rain;
 And bright drops scattered
From sodden boughs that rustle and complain;
And, loveliest of all, the drops that cling
To wintry branches naked glistening,
As if, in pity for the leafless trees
 They covered these
With buds more delicate than the first green buds of spring.

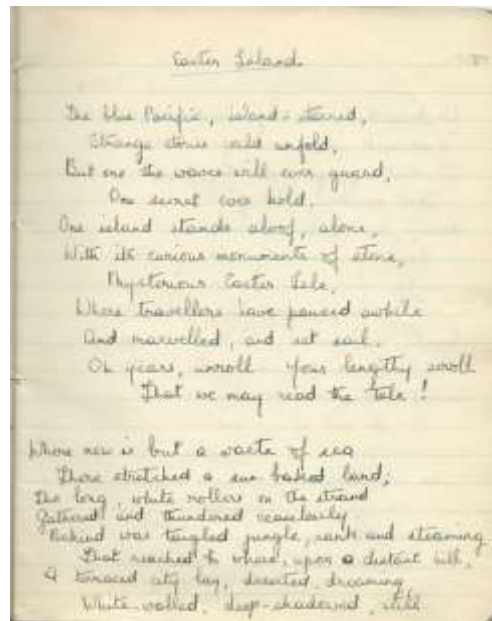


Easter Island

(Page 37)

The blue Pacific, island – starred,
Strange stories could unfold,
But one the waves will ever guard,
One secret ever hold,
One island stands aloof, alone,
With its curious monuments of stone,
Mysterious Easter Isle,
Where travellers have paused awhile
And marvelled, and set sail.
Oh years, unroll your lengthy scroll
That we may read the tale!

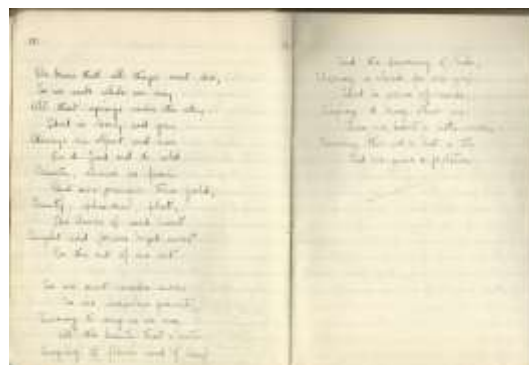
Where now is but a waste of sea
There stretched a sun-baked land;
The long, white rollers on the strand
Gathered and thundered ceaselessly
Behind was tangled jungle, rank and steaming
That reached to where, upon a distant hill,
A terraced city lay, deserted, dreaming
White-walled, deep shadowed, still.



We know that all things must die

(Page 38 and 39)

We know that all things must die,
So we seek while we may
All that springs under the sky
That is lovely and gay
Always our object and aim
So to find and to hold
Beauty, elusive as fame
And more precious than gold;
Beauty, ephemeral, fleet,
The desire of each heart
Caught and forever kept sweet
In the net of our art



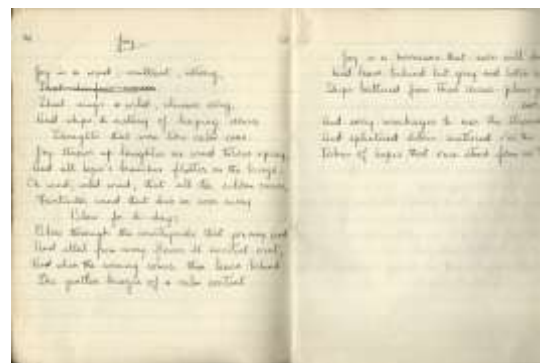
So we must wander away
 On our ceaseless pursuit
 Turning to song as we may
 All the beauty that's mute;
 Singing of flower and of leaf
 And the dawn-song of birds;
 Wearing a cloak for our grief
 That is woven of words;
 Singing to bring others joy
 From our heart's bitter sense,
 Knowing this art's but a toy
 And our game a pretence.

Joy

(Page 40 and 41)

Joy is a wind, exultant, strong,
 That sings a wild, elusive song
 And whips to ecstasy of leaping waves
 Thoughts that were like calm seas.
 Joy throws up laughter as wind tosses spray,
 And all hope's branches flutter on the breeze.
 Oh wind, wild wind, that all too seldom raves,
 Fantastic wind that dies so soon away
 Blow for to-day;
 Blow through the countryside that you may find
 And steal from every flower its sweetest scent,
 And when the evening comes, then leave behind
 The gentler breezes of a calm content

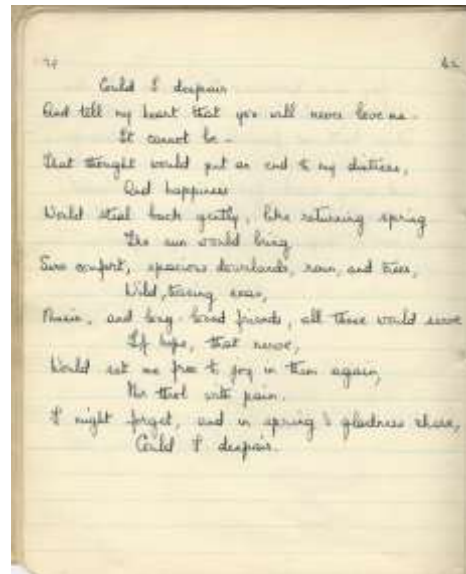
Joy is a hurricane that soon will die
 And leave behind but grey and bitter seas,
 Ships battered from their course – plans gone awry -
 And sorry wreckages to mar the strand,
 And splintered debris scattered o'er the land,
 Debris of hope that once stood firm as trees.



Could I despair

(Page 42)

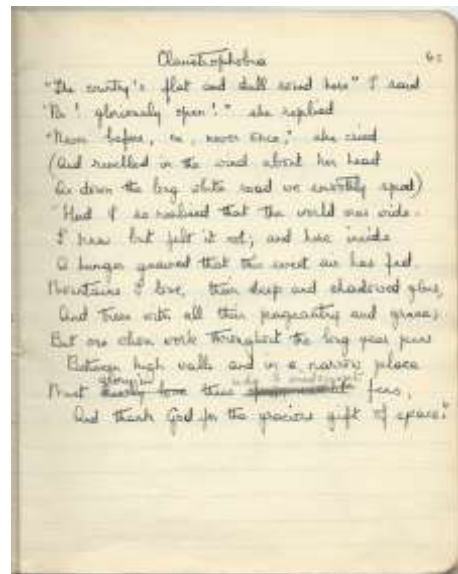
Could I despair
And tell my heart that you will never love me –
It cannot be.
That thought would put an end to my distress,
And happiness
Would steal back gently, like returning spring.
The sun would bring
Sure comfort; spacious downlands, rain, and trees,
Wild tossing seas,
Music, and long-loved friends, all these would serve
If hope, that nerve,
Would set me free to joy in them again,
Nor throb with pain.
I might forget, and in spring's gladness share,
Could I despair.



Claustrophobia

(Page 43)

"The country's flat and dull round here" I said
"No! gloriously open!" she replied
"Never before, no, never once," she cried
(And revelled in the wind about her head
As down the long white road we smoothly sped)
"Had I so realised that the world was wide.
I knew but felt it not; and here inside
A hunger gnawed that this sweet air has fed.
Mountains I love, their deep and shadowed glens,
And trees with all their pageantry and grace;
But one whom work throughout the long year pens
Between high walls and in a narrow place
Must glory in these wide and windswept place fens,
And thank God for the gracious gift of space".



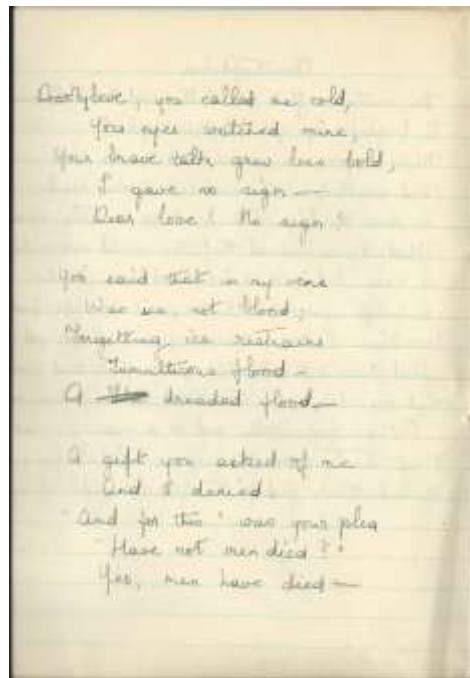
My love, you called me cold

(Page 44)

My love, you called me cold,
Your eyes watched mine;
Your brave talk grew less bold;
I gave no sign –
Dear love! No sign!

You said that in my veins
Was ice, not blood;
Forgetting ice restrains
Tumultuous flood –
A dreaded flood –

A gift you asked of me
And I denied.
“And for this” was your plea
“Have not men died?”
Yes, men have died.



I must leave thee,

(Page 45)

I must leave thee, love, a while,
A little while,
For my old friends beckon, smile,
And I must go.

Nay, love, cry not with pain,
With such sharp pain,
I hear the murmurous rain
And I must go.

When the wood's alive with wings,
With joyous wings,
My heart within me sings,
And I must go.

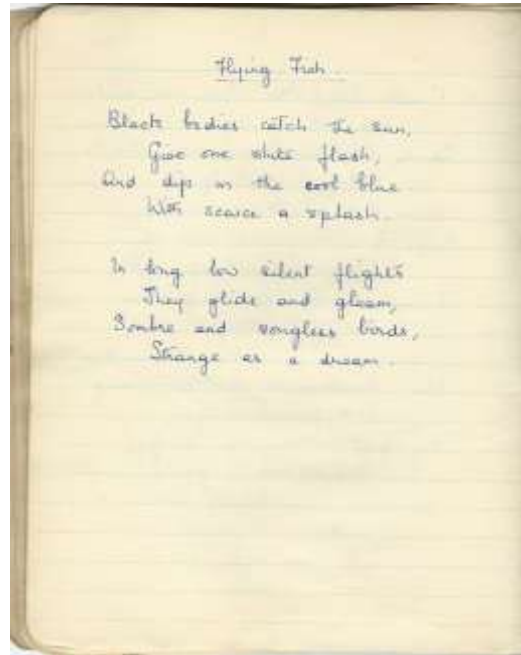


Flying Fish

(Page 46)

Black bodies catch the sun,
Give one white flash,
And dip in the cool blue
With scarce a splash.

In long low silent flights
They glide and gleam,
Sombre and songless birds,
Strange as a dream.



*Mary Marguerite Beal and Phyllis Evelyn Beal
Eastbourne*

Winter



Summer

