

Young America

Poems by Gordon Getty and Stephen Vincent Benét

Hark the Homeland (Gordon Getty)

Hark the homeland, hear it calling,
Listen back and catch the echo,
Hear the piping, hear the war-song,
Paiute, Chippewa, Tuskegee,
Then the axe, the adze, the hammer,
Next the barnyard, shipyard, steelyard,
Now the Iron Horse, the freeway,
Hark the homeland.

Hear the wholeness, good and evil,
Something dangerous, uncharted,
Headlong, headstrong in the darkness,
Hear the ocean in the darkness,
Hear the psalms, the chains, the shanties,
Hear the German, Erse, Italian,
Cantonese, Castilian, Farsi,
Hear the journey in the darkness,
Hark the homeland.

Heather Mary (Gordon Getty)

"If I go across the sea,
Jamie, will you follow me?"

"Heather Mary, when I grow,
Point your foot and I will go."

"Jamie, if I cross the sea,
Will you find and marry me?"

"Path and penfold, hill and hollow,
Where your foot goes I will follow,
Left and right,
Across the world from side to side
And where the sun goes in the night,
And you will be my bride."

"Jamie, you cannot live on air,
How will you earn, and pay the fare,
And find me there?"

“Well I will work, and do my best,
And build a boat and sail it west
And I will know,
For people who have seen you go
Will sing of you, and by the song
Will mark where you have walked along.”

“What if you find, when you are done,
And come to me beyond the sun,
That I have wed another one?”

“Then Heather Mary, I will know
That once I have seen beauty go.”

“Well, Jamie, I will wait for you
And marry none beside,
And you will know the way,
And come to me, and have me true,
But if I die before,

For other hands to bury,
Then you must find the stone
And write that you have loved none more
But me alone.”

“Then, Heather Mary, I will go
Across the ocean when I grow
To marry you, but if you die,
Then I will find you where you lie
And write upon the stone to say:
“This was the lady of the grace,
My only bride,
Her name was Heather Mary,
And we who saw her face
Will know the beauty of this place.”

My Uncle's House (Gordon Getty)

My uncle's house had eaves of white
And studs all plush with creepers;
We rucked the ground from break of light
And sang the Dutch songs late at night,
For we were noisy girls and boys,
And those who didn't like the noise
Learned to be heavy sleepers.

When strangers thought it wearying
That we should sing so much,
Then we would say we hoped, come spring,
To teach the gophers how to sing
And teach the crickets Dutch.

My uncle dies, my sisters wed,
I and my cousins moved to town,
And the old house was taken down.
It was a place, my uncle said,
For keeping cheer with live and dead,
For song by night and work by morn,
A place for being born.

I wish my sons no finer birth;
I wish them this, to find
How patience and the generous earth
Make life, how work makes wealth and worth,
And song the graced mind.

War Interlude

Daughter of Asheville (Gordon Getty)

Dance with me, daughter of Asheville,
Dance in the candlelight, dance in my dreams,
Dance in the white of the moon.
Dreams and the music will die in the morning,
The candle will yield to the shadow too soon,
Dance with me, daughter of Asheville,
Dance in the white of the moon.

O my beloved, remember,
Honor the word that we spoke to the stars,
Keep to the promise we gave.
Come with me, beauty, come dance with me, beauty,
Come dance in the wilderness where I must go,
Dance with me, Janet Alicia,
Dance in the wind and the snow.

Now and forever come with me, my darling,
Come hold me, my darling,
Come dance with the dancers, the merry and brave,
O my beloved, remember,
Keep to the promise we gave.

Dance with me, daughter of Asheville,
Dance in the candlelight, dance in my dreams,
Dance in the white of the moon.
Dreams and the music will die in the morning,
The candle will yield to the shadow too soon,
Dance with me, daughter of Asheville,
Dance in the white of the moon.

When Daniel Boone Goes By at Night (Stephen Vincent Benét)

When Daniel Boone goes by at night
The phantom deer arise,
And all lost wild America
Is burning in their eyes.