

THE POETRY OF ARCHIBALD LAMPMAN

RAYMOND KNISTER

THOUGH a new and perhaps final volume of the selected poems of Archibald Lampman has recently appeared, his work is of the sort which does not depend upon seasonal notice. More, perhaps, than that of any other Canadian poet, it is objective; and his vignettes of the outward Canadian scene will always have a present value, if an historic one. Indeed Lampman wrote of natural circumstance with such care in observation, such faithfulness of tone and almost submissiveness of mood, that his readers might be excused for forgetting or scarcely perceiving the definite relation he bore to the life and the thought of his time in general. We see in the admirable Introduction by his friend and fellow-poet, Duncan Campbell Scott, that his life was not without storm and stress, and yet for the majority of poetry-lovers his name evokes clear and tranquil pictures of the Canadian countryside.

Long furrows, steaming horses in the sun, a stump shorn of surrounding grass, quaint crows filling the forest with din, pines—"tall slim priests of storm"—snowbirds like tossing spray, piping frogs, the nearness of spring sounds, beardlike rows of icicles below cabin eaves, the eternal little speedwell in the grass, the vesper-sparrow's song, the roar of rapids in the dark, the path of the moon across water, the wild raspberry, blueberry, juniper, spike-nard, trees and their shadows, the lift of hills, the peace of lakes, drive of rivers, "the wind, the world-old rhapsodist", and again the cherry cheeks of lumberjacks and teamsters, the squeaking runners of sleighs bearing logs and cordwood!

Of these matters, with the undertone or *obbligato* of his own moods, Archibald Lampman formed his poems. It was Canada, reproduced in a spirit sensitive and open to new impressions, rendered with unassuming artistic certainty. So clearly was this the case that recognition was not long in coming, and the best of incentives, the regard of his fellow-workers. "Lampman never worked in loneliness or without appreciation", writes Dr. Scott. "He might feel that his soul was parched by routine, but he never felt that other desolating consciousness that no one heeded or

comprehended him." Yet perhaps this lack of tension between the poet and his environment was the element which kept him from development in the measure of those possibilities which became plain in him toward the end of his life. We are not concerned with failure here, but with the question why Lampman, with his elements of greatness and his artistic discipline, did not, even in his thirty-eight years, become a great poet.

He was born in 1861, of six national blood-strains, French, Dutch, German, Swiss, Scottish and English, at Morpeth, Kent County, Ontario. The combination of racial tendencies, Celtic temperament and Saxon endurance, which had produced in his family adventurous and sedentary types, Loyalist stock, made Lampman what he was, and gave him an unusual balance of qualities. His father was a clergyman of the Church of England, so that he early experienced the life of a number of small communities. These changes, however, did not seem to stimulate the proclivities of a connoisseur so much in human character as in the outer forms of nature. The study and the fields seem to have occupied his days. His father, moreover, with a fondness for what was called *belles lettres*, adhered to the critical faiths of the eighteenth century. The Augustan age of English literature had produced Dryden and Pope as its poetical prototypes, and there had been Addison and Fielding; it was an age civilized, life-loving, more brutal and more formal than others before and since. Though the young poet in effect rebelled against such tenets and repudiated such heroes, he was affected by them, even as he turned to the more transcendental Shelley and Keats and Wordsworth. If he seemed to lean too heavily upon these latter, it may be recalled that the generations moved more slowly then, and that the distance of Kent County from England counted for more. Moreover, literature is always considerably a matter of fashion, and young poets in such places still write from Tennyson and Arnold, proportionately no more remote from their own experience. Hence the peculiar fusion of qualities in Lampman's muse—since the form of poetry was primarily a function of taste. Though he lived in the later part of the Victorian age, he was not primarily a Victorian.

Lampman entered Trinity College, Toronto, in 1879, and graduated in 1882. It is plain that the state of Canadian culture at this time was peculiar. The feeling of isolation, of the impossibility of emulating classical achievement, and the consequent delight and triumph in any attempt to break what seemed to amount to a spell, may be described by himself. He is referring to the first volume of poetry published by Charles G. D. Roberts:

One May evening somebody lent me *Orion and Other Poems*, then recently published. Like most of the young fellows about me, I had been under the depressing conviction that we were situated hopelessly on the outskirts of civilization, where no art and no literature could be, and that it was useless to expect that anything great could be done by any of our companions, still more useless to expect that we could do it ourselves. I sat up most of the night reading and re-reading *Orion* in a state of the wildest excitement, and when I went to bed I could not sleep. It seemed to me a wonderful thing that such work could be done by a Canadian, by a young man, one of ourselves. It was like a voice from some new paradise of art, calling us to be up and doing.

Perhaps had there not been a group of writers at this time, Scott, Roberts, Carman, E. W. Thomson, W. W. Campbell and Lampman, the work of none of these men individually should have had the definite qualities which it possessed. This country was legitimately a province of England, as culturally the United States was; and the normal response of a writer to his environment was that of a more or less thoroughly transplanted Englishman. It is obvious, moreover, that the audience to which he is addressing himself exerts a pressure of influence upon the artist, and that his work is really an adjustment made so that he can be understood, even when it is essentially self-expression. Hence came the peculiarities of much of the literary work of Lampman's time. To have accepted Canadian experience and written of Canada in terms of nothing else would have been, if not impossible, at least immediately fruitless and unrewarded. Life had not been going on long enough in Canada for many people to have a vivid sense of it; and if they read, they hoped to see something after the approved models of Europe. Later, of course, came the cult of Canada as a scene of conventional romantic adventure. This was fostered by the public of other countries, and still reverberates here. In Lampman's time readers were so few that they could scarcely be reached at all save through the daily newspapers, but had to be approached by means of English and imitative American publications. The group to which he belonged maintained a balance between enthusiasm for their native land and emulation of the accepted masters of English literature.

At best, accordingly, the poet in Canada did well to keep his eye on the object, Canadian landscape, more rarely Canadian character and situations; the eye of one taught by all-too-few favourite English masters. Sometimes such a one did not even keep his eye accurately upon the object, and too often he lapsed into a

weak-kneed banality of line and a dependence upon the quality of recognition in his reader. "That is good verse, it reminds me of Shelley." It is not to be supposed that a poet of Lampman's gifts would now begin a sonnet, "Beautiful are thy hills, Wayagamack", or celebrate April in such strophes, fine in their way, as

Pale season, watcher in unvexed suspense,
 Still priestess of the patient middle day,
 Betwixt wild March's humored petulance
 And the warm wooing of green kirtled May,
 Maid month of sunny peace and sober gray,
 Weaver of flowers in sunward glades that ring
 With murmur of libation to the spring;

As memory of pain, all past, is peace,
 And joy, dream-tasted, hath the deepest cheer,
 So art thou sweetest of all months that lease
 The twelve short spaces of the flying year.
 The bloomless days are dead, and frozen fear
 No more for many moons shall vex the earth,
 Dreaming of summer and fruit-laden mirth.

To write in this way now would be equivalent to building one of those rambling, barrack-like houses once common to New England and our eastern landscapes, with fancy scrollings on the gables and the verandas. Such passing fads detract from basic and enduring qualities, in poetry truth of thought, integrity of feeling, and tempered expression, by which any structure outlasts the needs of one or two generations of men.

In Lampman's work we see a manifestation of the cult of nature, as it had become traditional since Rousseau and Goethe's *Werther* and Wordsworth; unabashed, despite a few dissenting voices, like Carlyle's bellow in *Characteristics*. Nature was not merely an inspiration to veracity and a high view of man—who is after all man's only subject—but an entity separate and outside of man and his manufactured concerns. Yet she was, contradictorily, a presiding goddess to whom he attributed his own qualities and even moods. Nature was calm and aloof, or tempestuous and moody with or in contrast with man; while, as a matter of fact, she is nothing of the sort, but simply nature. Man, according to such a criterion, was to turn to nature, not because he was so much man that he was kin to all creation, but because he was tired, sick with being man, and desirous of rest and a forgetting within a serene impersonality, a soothing power to which he could moreover assign his own tempers, "or wailful or divine."

Beyond this cult of nature for nature's sake, which has been the bane of gifts not vigorous enough to deal with experienced reality as a whole, Lampman was evolving. His acceptance of convention was mostly formal and tentative. He had a deep trust in reality, when others tended to fly to abstractions and idealizations. So it is a thing to be remarked that no poet has made clearer and more definite pictures, which are objective in the sense of meaning much the same to every reader, and at the same time has induced feeling, reported a fusion of the preconceived mood of nature and that of the poet. The famous *Heat* is an example of this, and among many others a stanza of *In October*:

Here will I sit upon this naked stone,
 Draw my coat closer with my numbed hands,
 And hear the ferns sigh, and the wet woods moan,
 And send my heart out to the ashen lands;
 And I will ask myself what golden madness,
 What balmed breaths of dreamland spicery,
 What visions of soft laughter and light sadness
 Were sweet last month to me.

And poems like *In November*, with plain statement and occasional prosaic lines, often crystallize in a felicitous naming of the poet's mood:

A nameless and unnatural cheer,
 A pleasure secret and austere.

There was a passion for exactitude in description and in the use of words which gives Lampman's work unusual definiteness and outline. He had a real feeling for the exterior world. Nor is the human figure always forgotten, though met as seldom as in a walk through forests and fields on a winter's day:

Across a waste and solitary rise
 A ploughman urges his dull team,
 A stooped gray figure with prone brow
 That plunges bending to the plough
 With strong uneven steps. The stream
 Rings and re-echoes with his furious cries.

Such glimpses as these, brief as they are, show that Lampman was not writing from imagination of bucolic swains in the pages of other poets, but from his own quite definite observation. Most felicitous, for example, is the last stanza of *By An Autumn Stream*, which evokes a feeling familiar to anyone who has experienced autumn in the open:

All things that be
 Seem plunged into silence, distraught,
 By some stern, some necessitous thought:
 It wraps and enthralls
 Marsh, meadow and forest; and falls
 Also on me.

After graduation from Trinity College, Lampman took to teaching in a high school, but finding the profession uncongenial, entered the Civil Service at Ottawa, in the Post Office Department, in 1883. This post he occupied until his death in 1899. It is curious that one of our earliest poets, and one dedicated to the aspects of newness, should for his virtues be sentenced to sedentary routine. The influence of such a life upon one given to the joys of the fields and the study was bound to make itself felt in the course of years. There is little feeling of frustration or maladjustment apparent in Lampman's poetry, and yet it existed in his life. He intended to remain with the Civil Service until 1899, the year in which he died, and then he intended if possible to be superannuated and, retiring to the country, to devote himself to poetry. The amount of annual income necessary for this course was still less at that time than it is now, but the thing was not to be compassed, Lampman failed in health, and in brief it may be said that Canada allowed her poet to die. In 1895 he wrote:

I am getting well weary of things. I was so far gone in hypochondria on Saturday last that I had not the spirit to go to my office at all. I went straggling up the Gatineau Road, and spent the whole day and most of the next under the blue sky and the eager sun; and then I began to perceive that there were actually trees and grass and beautifully loitering clouds in the tender fields of heaven; I got to see at last that it was really June, and that perhaps I was alive after all.

By the following year he had reached a philosophy of desperation, no longer caring about his fortunes, having "given up for good and all the notion of writing anything large or important." It was necessary for every man to ascertain his capabilities and his relation to the world, and adjust himself accordingly. "All our troubles in reality proceed from nothing but vanity, if we track them to their source. We form an ideal of ourselves, and claim what seems to be due to that ideal. The ideal of myself is entitled to love and approbation from my fellow-creatures: but the love and approbation does not appear, and I fret and abuse the constitution of things. To the ideal of myself money and power and practical

success are no doubt due, but they do not come, and again I abuse the constitution of things."

This is playing the devil's advocate with a bitter vengeance. To any reasoning intelligence it is plain that Lampman was within his rights in abusing the constitution of things. Seeing how this country lavished and continues to lavish prosperity upon men whose services, not always to call them such, could more easily be dispensed with, and seeing that it is because of a few men like Lampman that civilizations are remembered, it appears unfair that he could not have been rewarded with the right to live.

But if the opportunity of fulfilling his gift and the nature with which he was endowed was denied him, there were compensations, and there was growth of a kind. While the routine monotony of his day's work went on, and its lack of event acted as a pall to the quick spirit of poetry, it was chiefly the lack of leisure which prevented Lampman from doing his best work. Perhaps his sense of life was heightened by the very circumstances which made expression of it so difficult. Dr. Scott in the Introduction says finely: "The life of poetry is in the imagination; there lies the ground of true adventure, and though the poet's imagination may be starved and parched by the lack of variety in life, he persists nevertheless to make poetry out of its dust and ashes, out of its lets and hindrances, and even greatest poetry out of the small frets and sorrows that he shares with all mankind." As time went on, Lampman's writing, which had concerned itself with endeared natural objects, widened to include the major human emotions, and there even appeared a sense of character, if not of psychological subtlety. While it is unlikely that he would ever have rivalled Browning, he probably would have developed this side of his nature as time went on. It would be interesting to know, for example, whether *The Cup of Life* and *Personality* were not written in the order in which I quote them:

One after one the high emotions fade:
 Time's wheeling measure empties and refills
 Year after year; we seek no more the hills
 That lured our youth divine and unafraid,
 But swarming on some common highway, made
 Beaten and smooth, plod onward with blind feet,
 And only where the crowded crossways meet
 We halt and question, anxious and dismayed.
 Yet can we not escape it; some we know
 Have angered and grown mad, some scornfully laughed;
 Yet surely to each lip—to mine, to thine—
 Comes with strange scent and pallid poisonous glow

The cup of Life, that dull Circean draught,
That taints us all, and turns the half to swine.

This explicit doubt and misgiving before life becomes a more quiet sense of its mystery in *Personality*:

O differing human heart,
Why is it that I tremble when thine eyes,
Thy human eyes and beautiful human speech,
Draw me, and stir within my soul
That subtle ineradicable longing
For tender comradeship?
It is because I cannot all at once,
Through the half-lights and phantom-haunted mists
That separate and enshroud us life from life,
Discern the nearness or the strangeness of thy paths,
Nor plumb thy depths.
I am like one that comes alone at night
To a strange stream, and by an unknown ford
Stands, and for a moment yearns and shrinks,
Being ignorant of the water, though so quiet it is,
So softly murmurous,
So silvered by the familiar moon.

Such realization came but seldom, almost as infrequently as his use of free verse, so that such a fine evocation of the interwoven strands of fate as we find in *The Railway Station* is scarcely representative, but the more to be valued:

The darkness brings no quiet here, the light
No waking: ever on my blinded brain
The flare of lights, the rush, and cry, and strain,
The engine's scream, the hiss and thunder smite;
I see the hurrying crowds, the clasp, the flight,
Faces that touch, eyes that are dim with pain:
I see the hoarse wheels turn, and the great train
Move labouring out into the bourneless night.
So many souls within its deep recesses,
So many bright, so many mournful eyes:
Mine eyes that watch grow fixed with dreams and guesses;
What threads of life, what hidden histories,
What sweet or passionate dreams and dark distresses,
What unknown thoughts, what various agonies!

But it is usually to escape from such matters, and the too-exigent pressure, that Lampman turns to nature, walking in field and wood:

Ah! I was weary of the drifting hours,
The echoing city towers,
The blind gray streets, the jingle of the throng,
Weary of hope that, like a shape of stone,
Sat near at hand without a smile or moan,
And weary most of song.

So it came about that, instead of a pure delight in external nature, which had informed the substance of *June* with its tranquil and lovely lines, *Heat*, and *Morning on the Lievre*, flawless in their way with a few slight perfect words, we find him talking of "doubt and care, the ghostly masters of this world"; and when he would escape, he is burdened with a "soul shaped to its accustomed load of silly cares and microscopic dreams." There are signs that for Lampman nearly every city was *The City of the End of Things*, where "Flit figures that with clanking hands obey a hideous routine. And from their iron lips is blown a dreadful and monotonous cry"—a terrific vision of the end of a mechanistic era. This poem, because of its enigmatic and nightmare quality, is more impressive than more explicit complaints like *The City*:

Canst thou not rest, O city,
That liest so wide and fair?
Shall never an hour bring pity,
Nor end be found for care?

In *Chaucer* he mourns for the passing of hearty and oblivious days, and sees that now "too well we see the drop of life lost in eternity." He finds the hunger of Xenophanes still preying on the hearts of men who probe "the same implacable mysteries", who toil and "bear the same unquenchable hope, the same despair."

Yet this very attitude, which might be construed as a puritanic doubt of life which largely made life what it was at that period, developed into a higher and larger conviction, which is only now beginning to reach the minds of the generality of men. It can best be expressed by Lampman himself: "This conception is the child of science, reinforced by the poetry that is inherent in the facts of the universe and all existence. Thus reinforced, the conception is a religious one. It is independent of the ancient creeds, for it does not trust for its effects to any system of *post-mortem* rewards and punishments. It is different from the old Stoic virtue of the philosophers, which at bottom was merely prudence, a utilitarian quality. This modern conception is not a materialistic one, although at first it may seem so; it is, as I have said, poetic and intrinsically religious. It comes to those whom the new knowledge has made acquainted with the vast facts and secrets of life, arming them with a breadth and majesty of vision which withers away from the soul the greeds and lusts and meannesses of the old, narrow and ignorant humanity. The small ambitions and petty passions of this world seem infinitesimal indeed to him who once enters into the new conception and lives, as it were, in the very presence of eternity.

As yet this new spiritual force acts only upon the few, for it is a modern thing, but its growth is sure. Spreading downward, with the steady extension and dissemination of culture, from mass to mass, it may in the end work its way into the mental character and spiritual habit of all mankind. Then indeed the world will become less and less a hospital, and the old cankerous maladies gradually decline and disappear."

In the same gradual way, one feels, this conception of life would have permeated the conscious mind and the spirit of Archibald Lampman, and taken the outward form of more poetry to measure with the finest which he left; and perhaps work finer, even in the most adverse circumstances, than any which he was privileged to do. There was a balance of qualities in his gift rarely to be found in a poet; and while this conception would have taken its part in all that he wrote, he would not have forgotten that poetry is to make things real—those of the imagination, and of the tangible world: "simple, sensuous and passionate" were the words with which Milton described poetry. He would not have become bogged in moral preoccupations as Wordsworth was, nor on the other hand would he have found the be-all and end-all in the senses, as Swinburne did. His art was controlled, and conscious. Dr. Scott tells us how he first wrote the last two lines of *Winter Uplands*:

Though the heart plays us false and life be bare,
The truth of Beauty haunts us everywhere.

This creditable but quite extraneous sentiment was changed to the objective completion of the present version.

In truth it must be admitted that there was little of lyric excess and abandon, little of any kind of excess, in Lampman's muse. He delighted in June days and January mornings, but it was a mild delight. The note of zest is struck infrequently, as in *In the Wilds*, where "The savage vigour of the forest creeps into our veins, and laughs upon our lips", and the measures of *April in the Hills*:

I feel the tumult of new birth;
I waken with the wakening earth;
I match the bluebird in her mirth;
 And wild with wind and sun,
A treasurer of immortal days,
I roam the glorious world with praise,
The hillsides and the woodland ways,
 Till earth and I are one.

This is contradistinct from inspired description such as we find in *The Piano*:

Low brooding cadences that dream and cry,
 Life's stress and passion echoing straight and clear;
 Wild flights of notes that clamour and beat high
 Into the storm and battle, or drop sheer;
 Strange majesties of sound beyond all words
 Ringing on clouds and thunderous heights sublime;
 Sad detonance of golden tones and chords
 That tremble with the secret of all time. . .

Typical is the poem *In May*, where the poet, overborne by grief the night before, and aware that his lot may be the same tomorrow, finds distraction and an "hour of blessedness" by entering into the manifold life of birds, sowers, rivers, roads, and trees. He prays to Earth, "the mother who was long before our day" for "Some little of thy light and majesty." And in her voices he finds that

To him who hears them, grief beyond control,
 Or joy inscrutable without a name
 Wakes in his heart thoughts bedded there, imperaled,
 Before the birth and making of the world.

Lampman's feeling was deep and genuine, his sight unusually clear, and what from any point of view could be called lapses are rare. He found in the wind a brother and in the voice of frogs the voice of "earth our mother." He moaned, "O Life! O Life! . . . And the very word seemed sad", until he heard a veery, when "the very word seemed sweet." His goal was

song,

Whose substance should be Nature's song, clear and strong,
 Bound in a casket of majestic rhyme.

And on the other hand such ruling moderation seldom became actually austere. *Sapphics* gives such an embodiment to an oft-repeated conception of the relation of nature and human destiny, as far as could be wished from jingling banality:

Clothed in splendour, beautifully sad and silent,
 Comes the autumn over the woods and highlands,
 Golden, rose-red, full of divine remembrance,
 Full of foreboding.

Soon the maples, soon will the glowing birches,
 Stripped of all that summer and love had dowered them,
 Dream, sad-limbed, beholding their pomp and treasure
 Ruthlessly scattered:

Yet they quail not: Winter with wind and iron
 Comes and finds them silent and uncomplaining,
 Finds them tameless, beautiful still and gracious,
 Gravely enduring.

Me too changes, bitter and full of evil,
Dream by dream have plundered and left me naked,
Gray with sorrow. Even the days before me
 Fade into twilight,

Mute and barren. Yet will I keep my spirit
Clear and valiant, brother to these my noble
Elms and maples, utterly grave and fearless,
 Grandly ungrieving.

Brief the span is, counting the years of mortals,
Strange and sad; it passes, and then the bright earth,
Careless mother, gleaming with gold and azure,
 Lovely with blossoms—

Shining with anemones, mixed with roses,
Daisies mild-eyed, grasses and honeyed clover—
You and me, and all of us, met and equal,
 Softly shall cover.

Sometimes it is possible to judge the position of a writer, or that he would prefer to occupy, and his judgment of his own capabilities, by his ideal among the masters who have gone before. In the case of Lampman we find that his prevailing temperate quality and his search for the happy medium led him to find a poet on the highest plane in Matthew Arnold, rather than others of his age who embodied desperate qualities in a more extreme manner. "The whole range of life, time and eternity, the mysteries and beauties of existence and its deepest spiritual problems are continually present to his mind. In his genius is that rare combination of philosophy and the poetic impulse in the highest degree which has given us our few solitary poets." Yet this ideal of nobility does not close Lampman's eyes to reality, and we find him painting this deeply shaded caricature of *The Poets*:

Half-god, half brute, within the self-same shell,
Changers with every hour from dawn till even,
Who dream with angels in the gate of heaven,
And skirt with curious eyes the brinks of hell,
Children of Pan, whom some, the few, love well,
But most draw back, and know not what to say,
Poor shining angels, whom the hoofs betray,
Whose pinions frighten with their goatish smell.
Half brutish, half divine, but all of earth,
Half-way 'twixt hell and heaven, near to man,
The whole world's tangle gathered in one span,
Full of this human torture and this mirth:
Life with its hope and error, toil and bliss,
Earth-born, earth-reared, ye know it as it is.

This brings us logically to the subject of Lampman's sonnets. The qualities which he most admired when expressed in brief compass find their best form in the sonnet, while the discipline of the form was one which, sympathetic to him, he did not allow to become too rigid. In the remainder of his work metrical experiments are few, and we seldom find him seeking a variant in poetic expression to suit his own needs. Accordingly it is not surprising to find that the sonnets, of which there are more than a hundred, when taken as a unit, constitute the most impressive portion of Lampman's work. This strictest and most exigent of poetic forms, awkward in the hands of any save the most expert, and unsatisfying frequently with them, he made into an expressive medium of his own. Crisp, apparently bare sentences build a firm structure, a clear picture, a moment of emotional realization. Like most simplicity, it is deceptive; the reader's attention is seldom strained more than by reading a newspaper paragraph. While as for the vague, irrelevant sublimity which is usually drawn from the sonneteer by the demands of rhyme in the way that evidence is drawn from a witness by a cross-questioning lawyer, it is in Lampman generally absent. In pictorial quality these sonnets remind one of clear water-colours, and the even excellence of pictures in like number and quality seldom has been equalled. They form in their sort a body of work which will not suffer by any legitimate comparison. It is no small merit, if a negative one, that of few other poets in any age can it be said that they wrote so few meretricious lines.

Not to quote one of these sonnets is impossible; and it is almost as difficult, if one has known Lampman's work for long, to apply purely critical judgment. Therefore *Evening* may be taken, not as representing the best, but an old personal predilection:

From upland slopes I see the cows file by,
 Lowing, great-chested, down the homeward trail,
 By dusking fields and meadows shining pale
 With moon-tipped dandelions. Flickering high,
 A peevish night-hawk in the western sky
 Beats up into the lucent solitudes,
 Or drops with griding wing. The stilly woods
 Grow dark and deep, and gloom mysteriously,
 Cool night wings creep, and whisper in mine ear,
 The homely cricket gossips at my feet,
 From far-off pools and wastes of reeds I hear,
 Clear and soft-piped, the chanting frogs break sweet
 In full Pandean chorus. One by one
 Shine out the stars, and the great night comes on.

And *Late November*; though many of the sonnets were not professedly landscapes:

The hills and leafless forests slowly yield
 To the thick-driving snow. A little while
 And night shall darken down. In shouting file
 The woodmen's carts go by me homeward wheeled,
 Past the thin fading stubbles, half concealed,
 Now golden-gray, sowed softly through with snow,
 Where the last plowman follows still his row,
 Turning black furrows through the whitening field.
 Far off the village lamps begin to gleam,
 Fast drives the snow, and no man comes this way;
 The hills grow wintry white, and bleak winds moan
 About the naked uplands. I alone
 Am neither sad, nor shelterless, nor gray,
 Wrapped round with thought, content to watch and dream.

Lampman may be figured as in his poem, one listening in the darkness, stirred by all the currents of life in a wind, and its changelessness in a moon. The forces of life, the primary emotions were present to him; and if individual character and interactions of temperament were a trifle misty, that was perhaps the defect of his merits, the price of his poetic qualities. There are signs, too, that give the measure of a growth which his years were not to fulfil before he died. But he passed "with creative eye" over the country which the farmer and the lumberman and the railway-builder had possessed, and reaped another, more enduring harvest. What he left as heritage will long mean "Canada" in the minds of his countrymen, as surely as her fields and lakes were Canada to him.