

# ST. LAWRENCE WATERS

MURIEL MILLER HUMPHREY

Waken, drowsy rivulet, and seek the distant seas,  
Gather in the rills that play beneath the singing trees,  
Drink the wine that heaven spills, melt the tumbled snow,  
Dance your way among the hills, but ever onward go.

Fold the unambitious lakes, claim them for your own,  
Saunter through the yielding turf, leap through ravined stone,  
Comb your locks of silver spray and tie them back with rushes,  
Lest little traitorous winds at play shall bear them to the bushes.

Sing on, exultant waters, through this broad and golden land,  
Lift up your thousand tufted isles and border them with sand,  
That Atalanta of to-day with Hippomenes after  
May run their race, young gods at play,—so she shall lose with  
laughter.

The avid meadows reach your feet and touch your robe of blue,  
But his high majesty the sun claims it again for you;  
Put on your diamonds in delight, trim your skirts with lace,  
And in the hour before the night wear gold to do him grace.

Clap your hands, you little waves, babes of a mighty mother,  
Leap, leap on towards the sea, let no wind bear you from her.  
Now, Neptune's chargers to the fray—the winds may do their  
worst—

They shake their manes of hoary spray and rear like beasts accurst.

Press on, relentless torrent, breasting eastward to the sea,  
Cataract the precipice, beat on till you are free,  
Plough through rooted forest lands, crumble rocky crags,  
Disperse again the garnered sands, hurry the boat that lags.

Flow on, redundant waters, flow; you never more shall pause,  
For here are the laughing freshets that the April zephyr thaws,  
They come tumbling down the mountains, over the melting fields,  
And the snowy trees drip fountains as the sun his might unshields.

Patience, clamouring waters! Even winter feeds your flow;  
The frozen north releases now its melting ice and snow;  
You heave your mighty shoulders and you crack an ice-bound lake  
Whose jagged icy boulders follow grinding in your wake.

March on, insurgent waters, sweep you underneath the mists,—  
 Veils of chill spring mornings when grey winter still resists  
 The hot young kiss of venturing May which greens the stricken  
 soil—  
 Press on against the lengthening day with your uprising spoil.

Now dance you on, blue happiness, beneath the summer skies,  
 The painted birds float on your breast, fish leap at painted flies,  
 You toss and play the livelong day with painted shell canoes,  
 You murmur as you laugh your way, "Perhaps they are Neptune's  
 shoes!"

Trail your dress of moon-beamed silk through summer-scented  
 nights,  
 The moving jewels on your breast are heaven's reflected lights,  
 Lovers walking by your side will tell the lover's tale,  
 And boatmen with fair-weather pride unreef the moon-pearled  
 sail.....

Farmers claim your generous flow,—fishers take your spoil,  
 You spin the wheels along your way to ease the curse of toil,  
 Boys and girls dive in your blue, children splash in play,  
 Youth drifts on in love's canoe and dreams of love all day.

But on you ride past sombre spruce,—past the haughty pines,  
 Through prosperous farmlands on you go, with echoes of noisy  
 mines,  
 You wash the berry-purpled hands of children schoolward bound,  
 While avarice intently stands staking his borrowed ground.

Unheeding you fling your waves and hurrying on you go  
 Through springing green, through summer blue, through falling  
 gold and snow;  
 At last you greet the trysting ocean, giving tide for tide,  
 While he in proud and glad commotion enfolds his travelled bride.

Mingle, happy river,  
 Mingle with the sea,  
 You are his for ever,  
 Yielding you are free.  
 Perfect love can know no measure;  
 It must pour out life's full treasure  
 With faith's temerity.