

BEQUEST

GWENDOLEN MERRIN

If, when my babe is born, my arms grow cold
And my lips are robbed of all the lullabies
I learned to sing for him, let him be told,

From the first day when just his dear, young eyes
Can speak the comprehension in his mind,
That while he grows, so year by year I rise

In his own world, trusting that he may find
In all the joyous things upon his way
That I, body and soul, am intertwined.

Tell him that I, who wanted so to lay
My baby's cheek to mine, shall never be
Forgetful. Death soon dies, nor could it stay

My love. Teach him to watch that he may see
The thousand ways I wear mortality.

The leaves of grass, with living quietness,
Shall wait him, for to them I make request
That of my hands they keep the cool caress

He would have known when drowsing at my breast:
Softly shall they receive him when he goes
Alone among the hills, to dream, to rest.

And in the music of the brook that flows
Toward the sea shall sound my eager feet,
Running toward the love a kind God chose

For me. Always the aspen shall repeat
The tones in which we named our little one,
And with the sea's great heart shall blend the beat

Of mine until the tides no longer run,
Saying, "I live, I live, beloved son!"

THE DALHOUSIE REVIEW

In pools that limn the likeness of his face
I leave the shadow of the child I knew
In visions—fair, gray-eyed and full of grace.

I ask the thrush to take the joys that grew,
Filling those hours of hope, that it may sing
Of them where he may hear. He shall see, too,

On windy days when young trees bow to spring,
My youth and all its ecstasy uprise,
Rhythmic, abandoned, in the tern's long wing.

But love, my greatest gift, I would devise
To every gene where life has just begun,
That all his days, where'er his pathway lies,

Be hallowed by its bond, keeping my son
And me, with all the growing world, at one!