

The Prodigal Son

Marion Guild, before 1918.

German tune.

Here feast I at my Father's board
Who starved among the swine;
For me must every foot be fleet
And every lamp must shine;
For me the merry music sounds,
The dancers dip and twine.

My heart beats fast against my robe,
The best robe, soft and red;
With sobbing breath and tightening throat
And tears in rapture shed,
I feel His ring upon my hand,
His blessings on my head.

Ah, bitter was the way, and oft
My blood my path would trace;
And guilt and grief and stabbing shame
With all my steps kept pace;
And yet I famished not for bread
So sore as for His face.

The road seemed endless. On I fared,
Wresting each mile from death;
Then such an awe upon me fell
I scarce could draw my breath;
My spirit felt His coming as
Of one that succoreth.

Blind, fainting, to His mighty breast
He caught and held me fast;
I knew the fortress of His arms
About my weakness cast;
And, when He kissed my traitor cheek,
I guessed His heart at last.

The piteous words I oft had conned
I trembling strove to say;
But sudden glory round me poured
A brighter, richer day.
In wonderment I lifted up
My head that drooping lay.

The glory streamed from out His eyes,
As from all Beauty's throne.
O depths of love unthinkable
That in that splendor shone!
O pain of love that travaileth
And bleedeth for its own.

O gleam of wisdom hoar with eld
Ere sang the stars of morn!
O shifting, blending, dazzling lights
That thrilled my hope forlorn
To undreamed miracles of joy
And surge of life reborn!

He brought me home, and here I sit,
Even in my boyhood's place;

And on my very soul is stamped
Each largess of His grace;
But still transfiguring all I see
That radiance of His face!