

# With Tacoma Poets

## DEFERRED

Steilacoom in time of lilacs,  
Long ago, long ago . . .

Bluebells in the grassy places,  
Apple trees ablow,

And the pale narcissi faces  
Gleaming row on row!

There a bay of cobalt crinkled  
Or lay smooth and quite un-  
wrinkled,

There a red sun drowned at evening  
In a sea of glow.

There were paths and houses olden,  
Touched with light, unearthly,  
golden,

In Steilacoom in April magic,  
Long, ah, long ago!

Steilacoom when youth was on me,  
Long ago, long ago!

I had blue eyes, pert and dancing,  
Kisses to bestow;

And my feet were always prancing  
To and fro—to and fro

On crude streetways where old  
willows

Swept the air in leafy billows,  
Where the dogwood stars winked  
at me,

Seemed to guess, to know  
I was seeking my true lover,  
Hoping that I should discover  
In Steilacoom a fragrant madness,  
Long—too long—ago.

Steilacoom in time of lilacs,  
After years and years!

If my eyes were dull and faded  
From my stealthy tears,

If my soul were wraped and jaded  
From too many fears,

I could leave off wondering, hoping,  
Cease my blind and urgent groping,  
Could believe it vain and useless—

Oh, the bare thought sears—  
To look for love when time is  
rushing,

To hope for love when life is hush-  
ing

In Steilacoom in time of lilacs,  
After all these years.

Steilacoom in time of lilacs  
Just today, sweet today,

Someone at my gate is pausing—  
God!—his hair is gray!

But his speaking eyes are causing  
My dreams to kneel and pray

That his heart is wise and mellow—  
My heart ripened as the yellow

Of my head turned to white sil-  
ver . . .

Stay, my own love, stay!  
Tell me how you came to find me

With my spring lost and behind me  
In Steilacoom when age is stealing

This long-deferred today!

—BETTIE SALE.

(Reprinted from City of Destiny).

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Ledger