

Radiant Light

BY

A. RUFUS MORGAN

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A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "A. Rufus Morgan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and a long, sweeping tail.

SKETCHES BY

SALLY KESLER



FROM THE PRESSES OF
SLOANE-RHODES PRINTING COMPANY
COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

1960

TO THE MANY FRIENDS
WHO HAVE CLIMBED WITH ME

THE HEIGHTS

PHYSICALLY

AND

SPIRITUALLY

Christmas Poems

PEACE

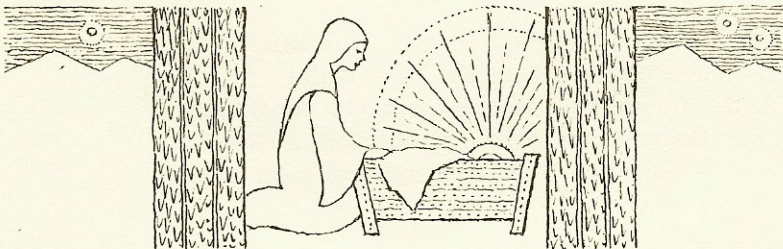
The Mother,
The Babe
In a lowly stall;

The Father
Above,
The Giver of all!

May these
And the star
In the infinite blue

Bring peace,
All peace,
To the heart of you.

1937



IN PEACE

O yet shall peace abide
Within our hearts to-day
What though the raging tide
Of war doth hold brief sway.

Christ rules in love alway:
From simple manger bed,
In hearts of those who pray,
E'en when to cross He's led.

O let us then rejoice
And praise the God of love
And make our only choice
His Christ Child from above.

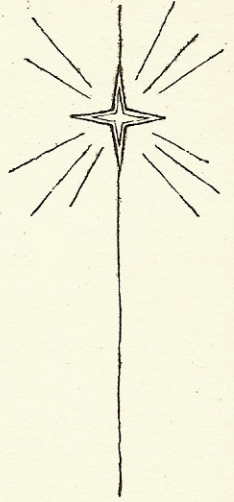
1942

CONFIDENCE

The gifts we bring this Holy Night to Thee, dear Lord,
Are trust in Thee, and confidence
That, though our feet have gone astray
And sought the easy paths of self,
Yet radiant light from Thine eternal purpose
Leads on to lofty heights of love and holy peace.

So through these days of war and hate
We kneel again before the Holy Child
And offer up to Him our trust, our confidence
That He will give to those who follow Him
New strength to climb the upward path to God.

1943

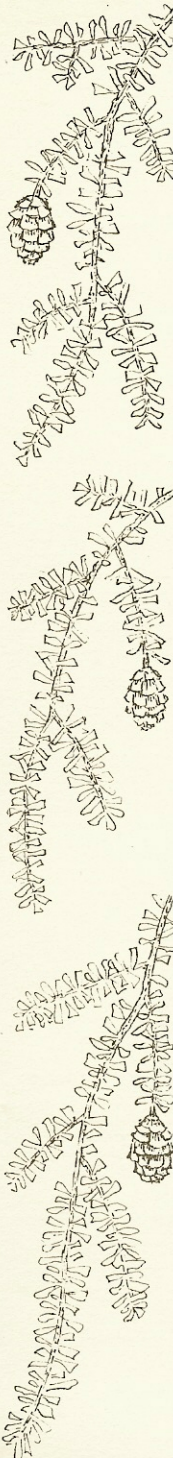


RADIANT LIGHT

The western radiance lights each peak
Of Nantahala mountain
As if the light came manifold
From some exhaustless fountain.

So came on that transforming night
When Christ lay in a manger
A light of never-ending power
To guide both friend and stranger.

And so may light of God's good grace
With radiant glow enfold you.
And may the riches of His love
In joy and peace uphold you.



CHRISTMAS

On other nights
The clouds have come to rest
On highest mountain peaks
And in the cold
Left there a veil of frost:
White radiance for the morn.

Last night, here,
Into our valley came the clouds
And glorified each weed and briar and pine
Around my cabin door
With crystal rime.

So men of old
Conceived of God afar on distant height;
Until Christ came
To bring a glory to our earth
And touch each heart to glowing beauty,
To witness to our God Who loves
And cares for every child of man.

Let us go forth
And manifest His glory
And His love to all.

ANGELS

An angel came
And told to men
Of Christ-child from above;
A multitude
Of heavenly host
Then praised the God of Love.

When you and I
With holy joy
Will follow His good word,
Then multitudes
Of men on earth
Will magnify the Lord.

Then let us now
With right good will
Come worship Christ the King,
That every one
Of every clime
May all their treasures bring.

PEACE

The glory that came to the shepherds
The night of the Christ Child's birth
Was radiant Love from the Father
To men of good-will on earth.

And Peace is the fruit of His coming
When men will but open wide
The door of their hearts and adore Him
That He may come in and abide.

Abide in our hearts, Lord Jesus,
We cast out all hate and care.
We welcome good-will in Thy presence;
Be Guest and our Master there.

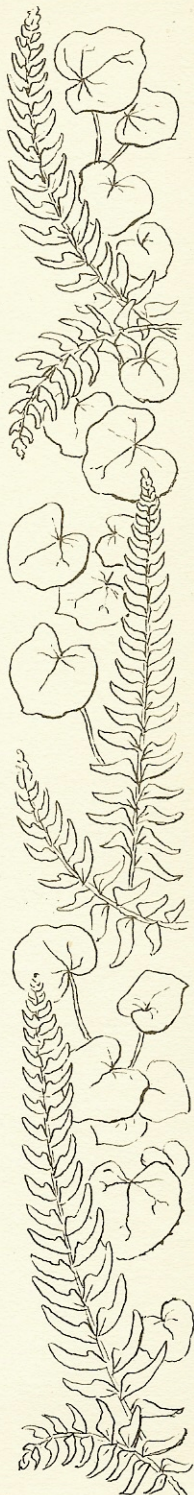
TO THE CHRIST CHILD

On every mountain top the snow lies still
And rime bedecks each twig of shrub and tree,
While here along the footpath by the stream
The green and bronze of spray bring peace to me.

The while you walk amid the Christmas fern
And galax mats displayed on wooded floor,
You will be sure the peace of Christ draws near.
He enters where He finds an open door.

The turmoil of a world at war has ceased.
Our grasping and our pride have met defeat.
Let all the healing power of God's good earth
Bring us adoring to the Christ Child's feet.

1945



INNER PEACE

Without was cold;
And sword and spear
And lash and cross
Brought blighting fear.

In Bethlehem
That selfsame day
The Prince of Peace,
An offering, lay.

He offers still
His love and peace
In midst of wars
That will not cease.

Accept from Him
His gift divine.
His confidence
And peace be thine.

THERE'S WHITENESS

There's whiteness on our earth tonight,
Not whiteness of the drifting snow,
Nor moonlight through the leafless trees.
Such whiteness earthly wanderers know.

This whiteness given to us now
Is gift of God to yearning earth;
A lantern for our climbing tread;
A radiance from a heavenly birth.

No longer through the darkness goes
The lonely way beset by care.
The Light of Life is ours to know:
Where need is great, His light is there.

May He be with you through the days
That come, whatever joy betide,
Or whelming trial test your strength.
May Christ be with you and abide.

GOD'S GIFTS

From mountain side
Have come today
These greens,
That they
May render here
Bright cheer
Our hearth beside.

They bring with them
A diadem
Of frost and mist
And amethyst
Of sunset sky
And ev'ry cloud
That passes by.

So may this blest
December day
Bring on your way
A memory
Of all the best
Our world has known;
And may you own

Our Christ as Lord today
Who came with us to stay.

CHRISTMAS LIGHT

The early light comes filtered
Upon the altar here
In Chapel of Assisi's Saint
At Christmas time each year;
Upon the linen white and pure,
Upon the candle flame,
As through the window pane it spreads
Its radiance in God's name.

Beyond, upon the mountain side,
A part of this same scene,
Is glowing rhododendron leaf
And mountain laurel green;
While underneath is Christmas fern,
Above, the downy seed
Of goldenrod and travelers' joy
And ice on every reed.

Rejoicing in God's gracious gifts
Of sacrament and earth
We join Saint Francis in his praise
At Christ's most holy birth.

1954



REJOICE TOGETHER

The winter greens rejoice
To mark His birth of old
Who once was born of Mary
As bands of angels told.

We, too, with them rejoice
That people far and wide
Of every race and nation
May worship side by side;

May look into His face
And know His power to heal,
May bring their broken lives
And to His grace appeal.

O let Him have His way
As you His name confess;
And oft as Christmas comes
His love will bless and bless.

NEW WORLD

I slept.

And in my sleep I dreamed
Of terrors spread abroad;
Of wars, of exiles,
Hate and fear,
Which plague man's weary road.

I woke

To hear the angels' song
Of peace to hearts prepared,
To those who know God visited
Our earth to make it new.

And it is new from Christ's birthday
All down the ages long;
For He has brought
The power of God,
And joy, and peace, and love.

STARS

The stars we send aloft
In arrogance and pride
Return to earth death-bent
And many ills beside.

Of old, God sent a star
To guide men to a Child.
His glory came to earth;
Quite humbly came, and mild.

So let's abandon hate
And leave our fears behind.
Let's seek the Child of love,
Yes, seek until we find.

Until we find His peace
And share His radiant love,
And know the strength which comes
As God's gift from above.

"O come, let us adore Him."

THE OLD SHEPHERD SPEAKS

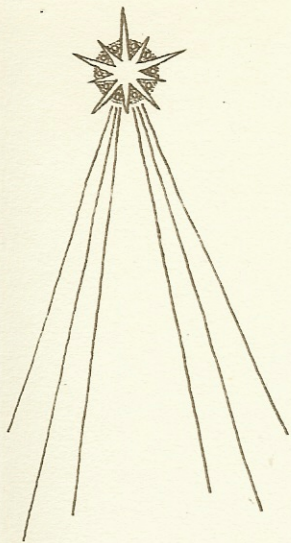
That wondrous night was ours
On Bethlehem's hill
When angels brought the peace
Our world to fill.

Long years have passed along
With war and hate,
As though no Christ had come,
Or came too late.

But 'mid it all there glows
A radiant light.
'Tis yours. 'Tis mine. God's gift
To us that night.

I saw Him then; a Child
In promise come;
Since when His peace is mine;
My heart His home.

"O come, let us adore Him."



LIGHT

Angels came adoring Him
Christ the new-born King;
Days and nights, creation's hosts,
Joyous hymns now sing.

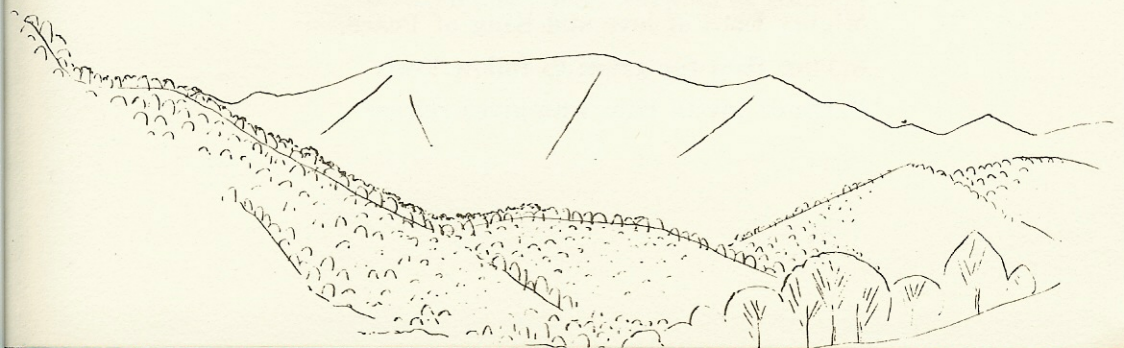
Dark the earth before He came
Dark the hearts of men.
Light now shines upon our way;
Light beginning then.

Radiant light reveals the host,
Heavenly host and bright.
God who saw His creatures good
Sets them all a-right.

He renews the sacred bonds,
Comfort gives and cheer;
Gives assurance that they live
Ever who were here.

Here they live within our lives,
Live as we have known.
Christ has those who live in Him:
They and we His own.

Miscellany



LINES WRITTEN ON WOLF MOUNTAIN

Kanuga, born of vision and love,
Conceived in faith and aspirations,
Keep ever clear the open trails
Which lead to mountain tops,
Where early dawn reveals anew
God's glory in His gifts of light,
Where every sunset over Pisgah
Gives us promise of another day
To labor and to live for Christ our King.

From the Kanuga Bugle

PRAISE THE LORD, O MY SOUL

Praise the Lord who lies in lowly manger,
Son of God, who comes to set us free,
Breaking bonds of hate to foe and stranger,
Giving bonds of love for you and me.

So we praise the Son of God most holy,
Mighty Lord of love and King of Peace,
Asking Him for grace to follow lowly
Paths of joy in Him who gives release.

CLEANNES

I have viewed from mountain top the day break,
I have walked through rhododendron grove,
I have breathed the winter air, have seen the lake,
Stream, and ground freeze hard in every cove.

Sparkling frost on winter briar and laurel
Brings a freshness to the soul of me.
Then on summer trail the wood sorrel
Cleanses every vein, clean as can be.

With my pack for days I've sought the high trail,
I have found primeval nature there.
Where the balsam bends before the fierce gale,
There in peace I find congenial air.

So I ask but help to keep the cleanness
Which has entered every part of me.
So as clean I'd walk in days of leanness
Lacking scenes to feed the heart of me.

Written one winter evening at Kanuga.

CONTINUING

The chanting fades,
The Star no longer shines;
The Wise Men Go,
And though each gift enshrines

A worship rare,
Yet men have oft forgot
A child was born
That they may falter not

Nor fail to claim
Their heritage of God.
O, let us dare
No longer low to plod,

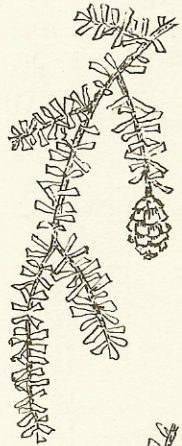
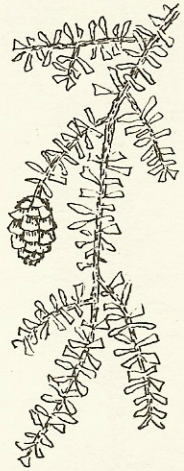
But keep the song
Alive the angels sang
And tell the news
Of love as once it rang.


NO GREENS THIS YEAR

The crystal ice hangs heavy on the trees
Of towering hemlock, spruce, and bending pine;
The laden boughs bend low in mystic speech
To tell to snowdrifts of a peace divine.

When winter comes upon these mountain sides
Imprisoning the galax leaves in snow,
I try in vain to find the greens for you
As token of my love which you should know.

But could you know the purity of this,
The glowing wonder in this mountain air,
You could but bless the God who gave in love
His Son, and thank Him for His world so fair.





IN HOSPITAL

The flowering plants around the room
Shout out their colors gay,
For they would have the world to know
That none can cheer as they.

And then there comes a quiet voice,
So low that few can hear.
For each small plant has on its lips
A secret for my ear.

The valley lilies say, "We bear
A calm, sweet word of trust.
Our green and white bring love to you
And beauty from the dust."

The Russian violets display
A sturdy courage bold.
"New friends we are to greet you here,
Receive us as the old."

Azaleas say, "We've come to stay,
So here we're glad to sit
For now. But when you're well again
Beside the Church we'll fit."

The cyclamen perked up its ears
And raised its dainty head.
"We're here to make you gay and glad
As long as you're in bed."

The modest English primrose sat
Content upon her shelf.
No great pretensions here I make.
I just present myself."

The pink begonia spread her blooms
As fresh as any maid.
"Though no aristocrat am I,
I'm here and not afraid."

The roses said, "We've been with man
For lo these many years.
Increasing beauty speaks his joys
And helps to dry his tears."

A lovely bowl of common blooms
In sprays of white and gold
Said, "Courage now, you'll soon be well.
See how we brave the cold."

Snapdragons lifted heads of white
And yellow blooms serene.
"We're not so fierce as is our name;
Judge by our peaceful mien."

Carnations red and pink and white
Stood calmly looking on.
"We grace each festive time and sad
When other blooms are gone."

One lily, white, mid all the rest
Held ages in its voice;
"From off the altar of High God
I come. Make Him your Choice."

*Written while in the hospital
Recovering from an operation.*





ALTAR FLOWERS

With sun and rain God blessed the earth
And lo! Glad colors came in bloom
And leaf. In grace and strength to birth
Came beauty forth to banish gloom.

We took the blooms from garden plot
And sheltered bed, and placed them there
On Altar high, that ne'er forgot
Our Christ should be, in nearness fair.

We bring them now to you with love
And pray that grace and strength may flow
From God who cares for you above
The bloom. May you Christ's presence know.

*Written for the Altar Guild
of St. John's Church, Columbia, S. C.*



ON HIS ALTAR

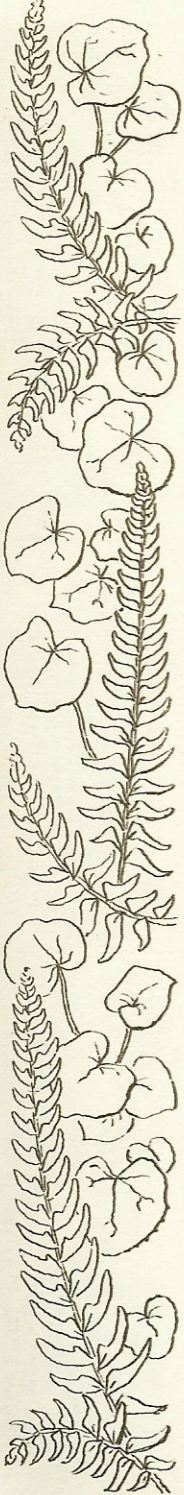
Here before Thine Altar kneeling
In this sacred morning hour
To Thy love our hearts appealing
Seek to find Thy love and power.

Bread and wine we bring in token
That Thy love exceeding great
Gave Thy body to be broken;
For its strength on Thee we wait.

We have beautified Thine Altar
With the blooms Thy love bestows,
As with hymn and chant and Psalter
So with these our spirit grows.

O, the beauty of Thy presence
Through these garden flowers we see!
In their form and in their fragrance
We are drawn in prayer to Thee.





A TOAST TO KANUGA

Kanuga —

Waiting here beside the lake,
In midst of pine and oak and tulip trees
And hedge of hemlock green ;
Waiting for the able, brilliant leadership
Of those who come to teach and lead
And open doors into the unseen :

We Greet You!

We pray that those who come
To enter this companionship
May leave behind their claim
To pride of place and merit,
And may find the Christ still beckoning
To life abundant which He gives,
Like Diamond Head upon the shore.

And so, in stillness like the surface of your lake,
Invite the sinners to be saints,
The fearful into peace
And all into abandonment of self
Where we may be united in the life of love.

Kanuga, We greet You!

*Toast given at Kanuga before the General
Convention in Honolulu, 1952.*