

Classic Poetry Series

**John Alexander Ross  
McKellar  
- poems -**

Publication Date:  
2012

**Publisher:**

Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

# John Alexander Ross McKellar()

# Football Field: Evening

Cross bars and posts, the echo of distant bells,  
The cool and friendly scent of whispering turf;  
And in the air a little wind that tells  
Of moonlit waves beyond a murmuring surf.

The glittering blue and verdant afternoon  
Has locked up all its colours, leaving dearth,  
Deserted, underneath a careless moon,  
The glory has departed from this earth.

The goals stand up on their appointed lines,  
But all their worth has faded with the sun;  
Unchallenged now I cross their strict confines;  
The ball is gone, the game is lost and won.

I walk again where once I came to grief,  
Crashing to earth, yet holding fast the ball,  
Symbol of yet another True Belief,  
The last but surely not the least of all:

To strain and struggle to the end of strength;  
To lean on skill, not ask a gift of chance,  
To win, or lose, and recognize at length  
The game the thing; the rest, a circumstance.

And now the teams are vanished from the field,  
But still an echo of their presence clings;  
The moon discovers what the day concealed,  
The gracefulness and grief of passing things.

Quick as the ball is thrown from hand to hand  
And fleetly as the wing three-quarters run,  
Swifter shall Time to his defences stand  
And bring the fastest falling one by one,

Until the moon, that looked on Stonehenge ground  
Before the stones, will rise and sink and set  
Above this field, where also will be found  
The relics of a mystery men forget.

John Alexander Ross McKellar

# On Reading A Catalogue Of French Prints

The Marquis looks towards the lighted stage;  
One hand is his; the lover's lips engage  
The other, while the lady stands between,  
Calm in her beauty, smiling and serene.  
Like figures poised a moment in the dance,  
They stay, the living monument of France,  
Nor seem to hear, beneath the 'cello's whine,  
The snarling mongrel pack of 'Eighty-nine. . .

John Alexander Ross McKellar

# The Lands

A sweet Franciscan of the Lands  
Sir Thomas Mitchell stares and stands  
Indifferent to the gentle words  
Of Bass, befriended of the birds  
Who simulate the snows of time  
By anointing him with lime,  
Ere they depart to flutter thanks  
In equal kind on Joseph Banks,  
Or cloud with high foreboding dirt  
The stony thoughts of Richard Sturt.

John Alexander Ross McKellar

# The Pool Of Hylas

Down on the floor, among the waving bronze  
Of weeds, and threading lilies' roots, are fish;  
And on the surface, flowers, leaves and swans.

A tarnished glint of scales, a bubbling swish  
Disturbs the shadows of that cold green night  
Of nibbling mouths that know no other wish.

No singing there; but, delicately white,  
The petals open on the leaves above  
Like butterflies that poise their wings for flight.

Nothing remains; even the mournful dove  
Has vanished, and the little breasts are gone  
That were too hungry for the lips of love.

John Alexander Ross McKellar

# These Expeditions

Ten years ago I climbed a hill,  
And there I climbed a tree,  
So, through the mist and raining, watched  
The troopships go to sea.  
A2—A6—the numbered list  
Steamed out in plunging chain,  
Till, hull down in the closing mist,  
I lost them in the rain.

So now and then I wonder  
If any Grecian boy  
Climbed to the highest hill to watch  
The ships put out for Troy;  
And on his thumbnail biting,  
While they went out to war,  
Fain would have gone a-fighting  
With Helen for a star.

John Alexander Ross McKellar

# Twelve O'Clock Boat

Only the creaking murmur of the wheel,  
The trembling of the engines as they turn;  
The ferry glides upon an even keel,  
And Pinchgut squats in shadow hard astern. . . .

The lips of ocean murmur at delay.  
The lovely moon no longer will refuse,  
And from the arms of darkness slips away  
To tryst with young Ephesians on Vaucluse,

Naked as when some mercenary Greek  
The galleys bore to Carthage stared the sky,  
Feeling a wind Sicilian on his cheek,  
And fell asleep with no more hope than I

Of life eternal, love, or length of days,  
Dreaming he saw his Macedonian home;  
Awoke, and duly went his ordered ways  
To die at Zama, on the swords of Rome.

But what was moon to him, and what was sea  
Two thousand years before myself was born,  
Are sickle moon and silver yet to me,  
Though Scipio should wait upon Cremorne.

John Alexander Ross McKellar