

Come, Sing Australian Songs to Me!

COME, Little One, and sing to me
A song our big wide land to bless,
Around whose gentle parent-knee
We've twined the flowers of kindness.

What, no Australian song, my child,
No lay of love, no hymn of praise?
And yet no mother ever smiled
With our dear country's winsome ways:

You sing the songs of all the earth,
Of bower and bloom and bird and bee;
And has the land that gave you birth
No haunting, native melody?

What, no Australian song, my dear?
And yet I've heard the cottage ring
With notes the world would pause to hear,
When at their work your sisters sing.

They sing the songs of all the earth,
Of tender sky, and dimpling sea,
But all their strains have not the worth
Of one Australian song, for me.

I've heard the harp the breezes play
Among the wilding wilga-trees;
I've swept my world of care away
When bush birds lift their melodies;

I've seen the paddocks all ablaze
When spring in golden glory comes,
The purple hills of summer days,
The autumn ochres through the gums;

What, no Australian song, my pet?
No patriot note on native horn,
To bind the hearts in kindness met,
And link the leal Australian-born?

You sing the songs of all the earth,
Of alien flower and alien tree:
But no one, in my grief or mirth,
Will sing Australian songs to me.

You sing of every land but mine,
Where life is lifting neath the sun.
Still all its spirit seems ashine
In you, my little laughing one.

Your eyes are clear Australian blue,
Your face is towards the future set:
The bounding, gladsome heart of you
Is hers—and only hers, my pet.

Ah, Little One, what dreams would rise
If, nestled here upon my knee,
You'd flash those soft Australian eyes,
And sing your country's songs to me!