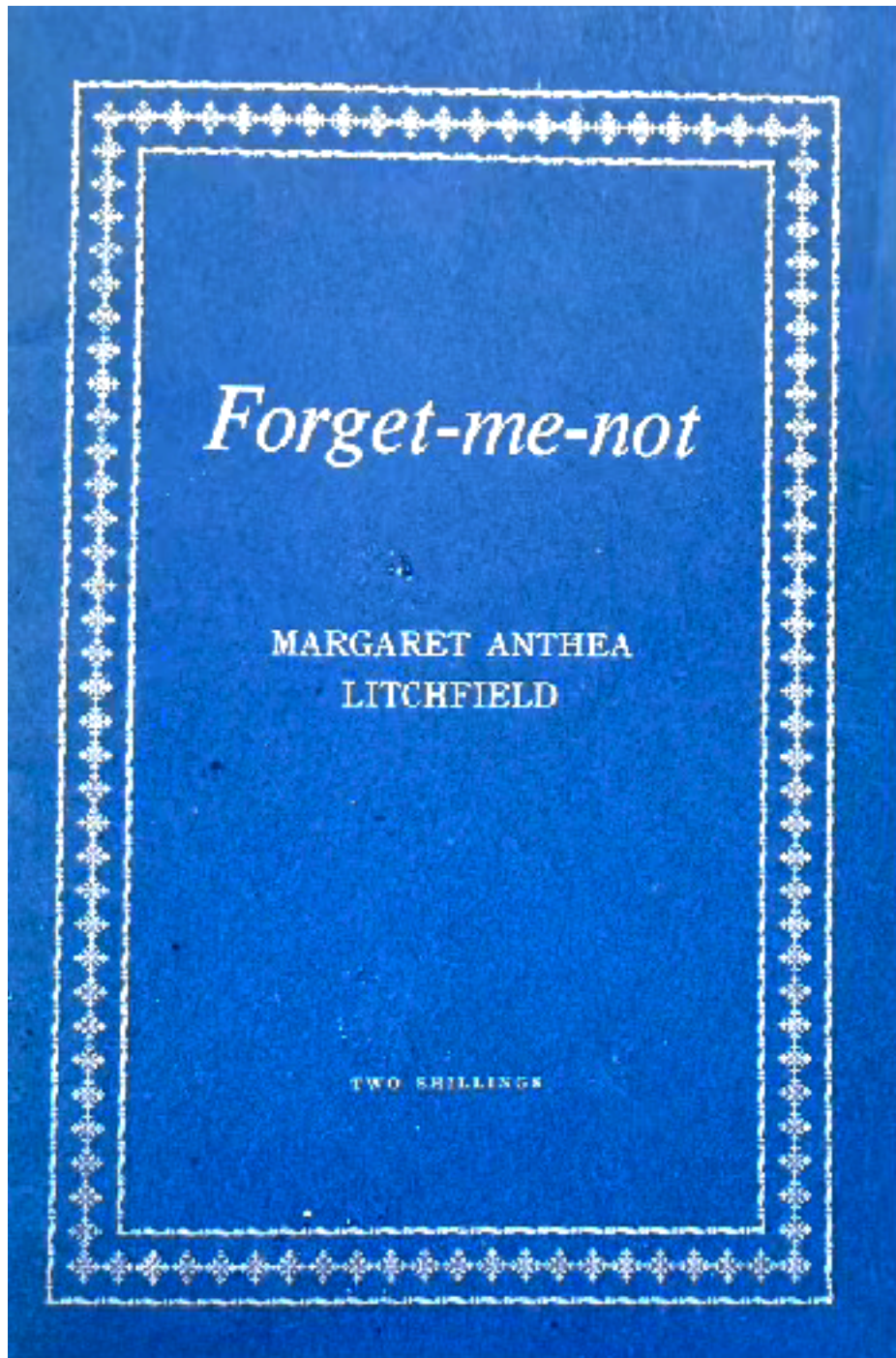




Forget-me-not

1960

To Simon

(digitised by Steve Litchfield, Oct 2025, contact if errors found!
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DREAMS OF BEWITCHMENT

Gliding into an eerie dream,
Stardust falling through the air,
Moonbeams glistening in the gleam
Of crystals sparkling, and the rare
Enchantment waiting there.

A golden web, a silver fern
Tangled by a silent lake,
The magic midnight on the turn
To morning's echo, in the wake
Of clouds of flame.

The fragrance of the wild bouquets,
Their radiance wafting in the breeze,
The starlight sending down its rays
On feathery plumes: and all of these
Caress the hills and vales and leas.

A far-off rainbow in the spray
Of rippling, misty waterfalls,
The sapphire-tinted gleams betray
The well-veiled lustre in the walls
Of purple-shadowed wonderlands.

The pearly flowers with diamond leaves,
Their velvet petals brushed with dew,
Their drifting perfume gently weaves
Into the mirrored twilight view
From glittering ice of silver-blue.

The coolness of the morning air,
The lilting murmuring round the lawn,
The sweet night air that soars to share
And greet it freshly born,
Ever picturesque - the dawn.

DREAMING

I dreamt of a swan flying, carrying me;
The moon spilt some rays in a gentle caress,
A garland of clouds floated, silver and tree,
Enveloping me as a pearl-petalled dress.
A bouquet of stars made a crown for my head,
A nightingale sang with a soft lullaby,
A lantern appeared of a rich, glowing red
Which I took and held out to the path in the sky,
I drifted along in the bush of the night,
A cobweb of star-dust fell, veiling my hair,
A fountain of jewels sparkled, radiantly bright,
While a mist-coloured moonbeam dissolved in the flare
I floated about, as a moth round a flame,
And reached out a hand to the glittering shower,
But a dragon appeared in a fiery frame
And I stopped, and I shrank from his terrible power
I screamed as he leapt and a thunderbolt crashed,
As my lantern blazed up round the foe,
And I fell like a stone, while a shooting star flashed
And passed out when I entered the snow.

Silence reigned with calm and peace,
Snowflakes danced with frost,
A frozen streamlet, white with geese,
A crystal valley crossed.
I stumbled from my icy nest,
Around a marble colonnade,
I courted danger in my zest
To reach a dazzling, snow-white glade.
Some silver mushrooms chime like bells,
A fan of ice creates a breeze,
A parasol of sequined shells
Floats gently from the snow clad trees.
I picked it up and raised it high,
It shone above my head
It mingled with the clouded sky
And turned a brilliant red.

Quite suddenly it seemed to spread
And weigh each moment more
I faltered with a growing dread,
Then threw it far above my head,
But it fell onto me instead
I pulled, I pushed, I dragged, I tore -
I took my blanket from the floor,
And climbed into my empty bed.

THE CROWDED HOUR

In ringing tones a clock proclaimed the hour,
The prologue to the daily play,
On cue was formed a surging, swelling shower
Of people rushing on their way.

Talking and shouting,
Smiling and pouting,
Jostling and pushing in the fray.
Cars jerking onwards,
Bikes swerving homewards,
Feet pressing forward in unsteady sway.

A mother drags roughly her petulant child
Ignoring its screaming and indignant cries;
Beside them unnoticed two lovers stroll by,
Their secret betrayed by the glow in their eyes.
A news vendor shouts his tireless tirade;
A gipsy girl commends her bunches of flowers;
School children run heedless—wholly unafraid
Of the approaching traffic and pedestrian's glowers.
Patiently queuing some tired people stand,
Their hurry postponed for a while;
A young girl is wistfully gazing ahead
Where a gown is displayed of magnificent style.
Frowning, an old-fashioned gentleman moves,
Puffing his pipe in dispirited way,
Recalling the clatter of cab-horses' hoofs,
Wishing the carriage was used to that day.

Advertisements flash in dazzling disarray,
Headlamps beam like spotlights on the closing scene,
Weary, the wanderers reach home by the ray
Of the cloud-set moon-the heaven's mystic queen.

THE YOUNG EXPLORER

Two years old and quite prepared
To conquer all his secret land,
He swaggers forth across the lawn,
Steadied by a swinging hand.
With concentration fierce and sure
He staggers forward awkwardly,
Firmly treading ponderously,
Swaying, stumbling more and more.
Suddenly he stops and stoops
To scrutinise a buttercup;
He pulls until the stem breaks and
Then tries to pick the flower up.
Clumsily he clutches it
And tastes a petal thoughtfully,
Inspects the rest regretfully,
And plucks another bit.
One by one the petals fall
Around him, gleaming gold;
He gazes sadly at them all -
No flower for him to hold.
A butterfly comes fluttering past,
The young explorer laughs in joy -
He means to catch and then destroy,
He sets off, toddling very fast.
But eagerness is changed to grief:
(His eyes were fast upon his prey)
His foot tripped on a jagged root,
He fell... then in stunned silence lay.
His breath regained
He opened wide,
He screwed his face
He howled; he cried.
No more the great explorer
Undaunted, strong, and bold,
But forlorn baby weeping, who
Is only two years old.

THE MESSENGERS

Night shepherds lay upon the hill,
Relaxed, yet looking o'er their sheep,
The darkness induced quietness while
They watched the stars to conquer sleep.
Peace crowned the silence with content,
Each man was still in meditation;
His mind too slow to understand
His sudden, heaven-sent expectation.

A brilliant light shone from the sky,
The startled shepherds shook in awe,
Amazed and blinded, dazed with fear,
Uncomprehending what they saw.

A shining figure stood quite near,
Arrayed in gleaming white,
It looked to where the simple men
Were trembling in their fright.

*"Don't be afraid! I bring you news:
A manger holds a new-born boy;
This child is Christ, the Saviour King,
His birth will fill the world with joy."*

As the angel spoke these words,
And as the shepherds gazed, great throngs
Of radiant angels filled the sky,
Praising God with joyous songs.
A dazzling light shone all around,
Exultant singing filled the air,
They sang rejoicing in the birth-
"Glory to God, and peace on earth."
The watchers trembled, rapt and still,
Till heaven had claimed its great army,
Gloom descended on the hill,
But hearts were fired in ecstasy.
Each man was silent, unaware
That time was spent in contemplation,
Those precious moments passed in prayer
After the angel's revelation.

At last one moves and takes his staff,
The others follow in a daze,
One brings a sleeping new-born lamb,
They leave their tranquil flocks to graze.
Eagerly they made their way
To Bethlehem, where Jesus lay,
Reward for their humility -
Shepherds go to Shepherd see.

THE RAINBOW

It cannot be a sudden shower
And sunbeams make this radiant arc —
Some magic light has lost its way
And mingled with a coloured spark.
A glistening ray creates the bow,
Then sets an arch of brilliant jewels,
They melt into a gentle glow;
Enchantment sets as sunshine cools.
Softened tints gleam hazily;
The rainbow soars towards the sky
To fall again caressingly
And on the far horizon lie.

If you should seek the rainbow's end,
With treasure your design,
Why, take the sack of gold away,
But make the rainbow mine.

FORGET-ME-NOT

I can't forget, forget-me-not,
How shyly you appear,
Demure, you nestle in your plot
To grace another year.

Blue as the sky around the sun,
As soft as thistle-down,
As pure as cobwebs newly-spun,
With dew your diamond crown.

Enchanting home of sun and breeze,
Sapphire-petalled polonaise,
Sweet slave of honey-seeking bees,
Delightful jewel of April days.

CLOUDS

A glimpse of heaven shows in the clouds
In peerless loveliness,
The firmament's kaleidoscope
Reflects their constant restlessness.

When sunlight floods the favoured earth,
Puffed-out clouds glide leisurely,
Soft and misty, blue-edged white,
Pearl-filled plumes of gaiety.
They range like mountains cloaked with snow;
Strange dragons form, then steal away;
A castle beckons floating by,
Then mingles with the hazy sky.

When the sun sets in the west
And brilliant rays cascade the world,
The clouds are painted brilliant gold,
And flame-red banners are unfurled.
Surely this blazing, matchless sight
Is but the glow from paradise:
The thin-veiled window of God's home
Has poured His radiance o'er the skies.

The last pink cloud has disappeared;
A spray of stars shines sleepily;
The clouds are dark and hardly seen,
They wander, wrapped in mystery.
They roam around the shining moon
As dusky shadows; all too soon
They cross its face and drift away,
Gleaming in its gentle ray.

A troop of war-like clouds go by,
In sombre dress of hostile troops,
Black with anger, armed with rain,
Spreading slowly o'er the plain.

No king can stop the threatened storm,
No man control their fierce onslaught—
The clouds will rage with violence,
And man's desires will count for naught.

Clouds are curtains hiding God,
But none can screen His majesty,
His glory shines in each small cloud;
The guardians of His treasury.

BLUEBELL WOOD

At first they grew in patches, like some brilliant counter-pane,
Brushed with dew and clustered in a tangled painted chain,
Flowers bereft of any order,
Free to honour nature's whim,
Attended by her gentle winds, the sun and falling rain.
Along a leaf-strewn path amidst the shielding trees,
Beneath the boughs, their ivy covers swaying in the breeze,
Until, like a veil that's withdrawn for a while,
Perfection is present, with radiant smile.
Wave after wave of blue tinged with white,
A carpet of flowers with glistening pile;
A soft fringe of primrose;
A centre of purple,
Where orchid is reigning in solitary style,
Ten million star-shaped sapphire bells,
Their perfume resting on the air,
Gleaming in sunbeams, or nestling in shadows,
Bowing their heads as if absorbed in prayer.
Butterflies dance by with quivering wings;
A blue-tit soars up with a twig for its nest;
Singing, a robin on wind-blown branch swings,
Proud of the hue of his renowned red breast.
Alone he can sing of his joy to be there,
Inviting all nature his eloquence share,
A corner from heaven - unspoilt, rare, and free,
Beauty eternal from God's treasury.

THE BUTTERCUP

Five gleaming suns,
A soft green star,
A crown of gold,
Fair buttercup.

King of the fields,
The garden's queen,
Creation's wealth,
Rich buttercup.

Goblet of dew,
The sunbeams' home,
Moon-kissed repose
Fresh buttercup.

Exquisite gown
Of purest gold,
With velvet faced
Bright buttercup.

Bewitching bride
To meadow blessed,
Fragrant caress,
Pure buttercup.

Butterflies' rest;
The softest bed,
Perfection's god,
Cool buttercup.

A radiant jewel,
A yellow flame,
Enchanted flower,
Sweet buttercup.

THE FAIRGROUND

As a light attracts the moths,
It drew the people near,
From the town and from the fields,
The lodestar of the year.
A candle in the valley
Of shadows calm and cool,
Now filled with shouts and laughter,
A sparkling, dazzling jewel.
Shrieks of joy cut through the night,
Figures whirling, clinging tight
Half in pleasure, half in fright
In a magic daze.
Music blending in the air
With rifle-shots and childrens' cries,
Radiant ones without a care
Dumbly clutch their precious prize.
Coloured lights enchant the dream,
Flashing lights shine welcomely,
Spotlights picking out the gleam
Of a winding silver slide;
Down the people swoop like birds
Soaring down upon their prey,
Breathless, eyes alight with fire,
Lit up by a sudden ray
From circling, sparkling rocket-ships.

Contented little children driving wooden motor-cars
With happy concentration and a growing beaming pride
Lost in make-believe among such golden paths,
Oblivious of their parents strolling smiling at their side.

A glimpse of white — a furry ball,
A dog is rushing to the call
Of urgent yapping from the stall
Where toffee vendor's ugly bawl
Excites — not calms - the growing brawl.

A silent couple arm in arm
Approach a gipsy, old and kind,
Their shy request, her outstretched palm
Now crossed with silver speaks her mind.
The air is cold, the moon is high
Stars begin to spot the sky,
The music stops, the people spread
Over the hills with weary tread.
And ere their homes come into sight

The fair-folk settle for the night.
The camp is quiet; one by one
The lights go out, and peace has come,
Repose in comfort, warmth, then sleep,
The heavens maintain slumber deep.

THE BUBBLE

The sun sank far beyond the western hills;
The sky - a fan of flame-edged fleecy clouds;
The weeping willows, immune to the chills
Of the wailing evening wind that fills
The night with magic.

A curled-up pearly petal fell
Onto the water below,
Sending out circles of ripples and bubbles,
Creating a glistening glow.

One bubble remained to sail through the waves,
Sent by the salt sea-breeze,
To swirl among the cloaks of coral
And mysterious seaweeded frieze.
Then down it cruised to float on the water,
Propelled by the wending wind,
Leaving the sparkling surf as a
Silver spray where it had skimmed.
Then whirling around it made its way
From the darkening world at night
Down below, where moved and lay — unknown to the evening light,

Small creatures gliding in the ghostly gloom,
Away from where the lakeside water flowers bloom,
From where the quicksands lure their victims to their doom,
And here... found peace.

CHRISTMAS BY CANDLELIGHT

At last the room was silent, alone again with peace,
Lit by one glowing candle burnishing its flame,
While embers from the dying fire before the warmth should cease
Sent gentle rays across the room, to place in deepest shame
The harsh bright lights that were lit up some many hours before.

Centred was a Christmas tree, glittering with gold
And silvered tinsel... midnight-blue... tinged with snowy white;
The faintest, sweetest ringing from the twinkling swinging bells;
The sparkling star still shining—as the other did that night,
Mirrored on another wall, still flashing in the light.

The walls transformed with shadowed rows
Of dancing, twisting, papered swirls,
Whilst the bouncing balloons glow
With gleaming colours smooth as pearls.
The crimson balls on holly leaves,
The crystal sprays of mistletoe,
All watching for the start of eve's
Break into daylight with the glow
Of rising sun.

All these things and more beside
Make up the peace of Christmastide.

AN AUTUMN STORM

When the sky first bore the sun that morning
The rain started tumbling down,
The glowing sky had given first its warning
Then changed to its heavy grey crown.
The rain on the leaves on the pavements
Repainted them in golden flakes,
Changing them from dusty, dry dead leaves
To treasure-such as only God makes.
But ere each townsman left his bed
The rain had moved away,
A brilliant sun shone overhead
And promised a fine day.
The sky was blue, save for some clouds
Of white and misty grey,
And warmth touched every tiny nook
With every sun-sent ray.

The streets were full, the playgrounds full,
The gardens occupied,
And no one thought to watch the clouds,
And no one went inside.
Suddenly they all looked up,
A cloud had crossed the sun,
Black and spreading
Eastward heading
Overhanging everyone.

A chill had fought the heat and come
To reign; while birds had stopped their song
And flown to shelter hurriedly.
The silence told of something wrong,
And lent its shivers to the throng.
No movement came to break the spell,
So still the people gazed,
And when the first large raindrops fell
They still stood there amazed.
But as the drops began to sting
They turned and pushed and ran,
They looked for shelter; finding none
Fled home as best they can.

Faster and faster the rain came down,
Heavier and heavier became,
Soon not a soul was seen in the town,
Nor a face left pressed to the window-pane.
A wind sprang up and seized the rain
And flung it on its way
And forced each drop to do its worst
Then all together stay.
The gutters filled and overflowed
And swept the main road clean,
Puddles floated leaves and grass
Where empty grooves had been.
Lightning crossed the grieving sky -
White against the black;
Nature's power passes by
Leading thunder's crack.
While the deluge surged and rose
Day gave into night,
Darkness deepened dusky clouds
And claimed the last half-light.

Around the town black outlines swayed
Like Indians round a fire,
Tossing and falling, restlessly straining
Like puppets controlled by a tugging wire.
No longer trees, but tormented toys
Alive to the whims of the wind;
Relentlessly rushing, it wailed its lament,
While enticing bushes, 'neath dead branches pinned.
The last of the leaves swirled down to the ground
Lit up by the lightning's flash
And came to rest uncertainly
To the sound of the thunder's crash.

At last, when the people shook in fright
And crept away to pray.
The rain clouds melted in the night
And left the moon's soft ray.

SLEEP

The girl was weary: heavy was her tread,
With gratitude she sank onto her bed,
Too tired to move, too tired to care
If she should spend the whole night there.
But cold began to touch her skin
And slightly roused the dormant form,
So drowsily she clambered in
And succumbed to the spreading warm.
The dark and silence seemed to share
Some secret planned to defeat care,
So worries left her restless mind
Till naught but joy was left behind.
She smiled as moments of her day
Were portrayed in her memory;
Allowed her fancied thoughts to stray,
Await her - mingled hazily.

The wind was low and seemed content
To zig-zag gently through the trees,
The rustling leaves seemed solely meant
To lull her mind and seize
Her thoughts and lead her to the land of dreams.
Far, far away some music played
Too low for her to catch the tune,
She, lying still, was captured by
The throbbing rhythm, knowing soon
She'd hear no more.
A last look round towards the sky,
Where stars were studded carelessly
Like watching eyes,
To where the cloud-surrounded moon shone mistily
Telling her that midnight's peace was nigh.
Then sleepy eyes glanced over her room,
Where familiar things loomed at her out of the gloom,
She shivered as shadows lurked all round her bed
And hastily conquered her instinctive dread.
So tired.., too tired to feel any more,
So sleepy... the blanket falls to the floor.
But she never stirs, nor will for a while,
She lies fast asleep adorned with a smile.

MIDNIGHT MASS

A beam shone through the falling snow
To guide the people on their way,
The midnight church-bells pealed in joy
To welcome them to come and pray.
Reverently each entered in
And knelt before the Presence there,
Friends and strangers, next of kin,
United in devoted prayer.
The altar glowed-lit by the flames
Of burning candles and the gold
Of candlesticks, and the flowers too
Gave honour to the story told.
All were silent - then the choir
Proclaimed the Holy Saviour's birth,
With joyous singing thanking God
That he had come to save this earth.
For as incense drifted slowly to the sky
So their mingled prayers and thoughts
Of happiness and thankfulness
Are offered up on high.
And as they take the Food of Life
Resolve to live their life anew,
As the Comfort enters in
To make a heart be pure and true.
Before the crib the children kneel
And understand the stable scene,
They gaze in awe for they can feel
Love from a dwelling poor and mean.
Ite. Missa Est — in joy His people go
With renewed hope and love and peace,
Friend with friend, and friend with foe,
Lord, may this spirit never cease.

THE FUTURE

Many things can happen 'ere fifty years are past,
Sentiments can weaken, longings might not last,
Friendships might be broken - proved to be untrue,
When time has thus passed by us, will I still think of you?

You told me that you loved me,
I think you meant it too,
But then I had no courage
To say that I loved you.

But time may give you better friends,
More worthy to love you,
And with them you'll do willingly
The things we used to do.
You may in time forget me,
Forget my childhood claim,
But I could not forget thee
And live on just the same.
Even if you do forget
The feelings we both knew,
I will spend all of my time
Thinking of you.