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APPENDIX

Biography of Katharine Lee Bates

The poet of “*America the Beautiful*” was a professor of English at Wellesley College. Her father’s family left England and settled in Hingham, Massachusetts, in 1635. He was pastor of the Congregational Church on the Village Green at Falmouth on Cape Cod and died from a back injury when Katharine was one month old. Her mother, a graduate of Mount Holyoke Seminary, moved the family to Wellesley where Bates graduated in 1880 from then-new Wellesley College, thanks to help from her two older brothers.

After spending a year at Oxford University, she began teaching English at Wellesley College and soon became a full professor. Her salary was \$400 per year “with board and washing.” When she met Longfellow, he praised her high-school poem, “Sleep”. Writing was a continuing priority that provided some financial support—children’s stories, books of verse, textbooks, travel books based on her three sabbatical years in Europe and the Middle East.

In the summer of 1893, when she was lecturing at Colorado College in Colorado Springs, Bates joined a group that took a rough prairie wagon ride plus a struggle by mule, followed by an exhausting hike to the top of 14,000 foot-high Pike’s Peak. Overwhelmed by what she saw, Bates scribbled in her notebook all four verses of our unofficial national anthem celebrating America. When published, the poem was an instant hit. Her copyright provided continuing royalties for years.

At Wellesley the poet developed an intimate partnership with Katharine Coman, the professor of economics who was also dean of the college. Both were poets. They jointly wrote *English History as Taught by English Poets*. Their “Boston Marriage” of living together for twenty-five years ended in Coman’s death by cancer at age 57. Bates, in her agony, published *Yellow Clover: A Book of Remembrance* celebrating their love and their common labor not only in education and literature but also their involvement in social reform with their colleague Vida Scudder.

Bates died at home in Wellesley at the age of seventy. Her contribution to life is symbolized by our vibrant singing of “America the Beautiful.” A biography of her by Dorothy Burgess is *Dream and Deed: The Story of Katherine Lee Bates* issued by the University of Oklahoma Press. In addition to the Wellesley College dormitory bearing her name, a life-size bronze statue of her stands on the grounds of the Falmouth Public Library.

Poetry Texts

America the beautiful

O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet,
Whose stern, impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law!

O beautiful for heroes proved
In liberating strife,
Who more than self their country loved,
And mercy more than life!
America! America!
May God thy gold refine,
Till all success be nobleness,
And every gain divine!

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

The Flag

It is not fair to see, our starry banner?
You, as an artist, who have pledged allegiance
Only to Beauty, find it crude in color,
Stiff in design, void of romantic symbol,
Unvenerable? England's golden lions,
Japan's in chrysanthemum, imperial flower
Blooming in red as in a field of battle,
The Holy cross of Switzerland, out-value
To all impartial, pure, aesthetic judgement
The flag our patriot folly terms Old Glory?

I cannot tell. Perchance I never saw it.
When on the seas or in some foreign city
Nay, here at home above a county school – house,
I find it floating on the wind, it beckons
My heart into my eyes, it is not bunting
Mere red and white and blue,--- the starry cluster,
Those gleaming folds; it is the faith of childhood,
The unison of strong; rejoicing millions,
The splendor of a vision men have died for,
The passion of a people vowed to freedom

Glory

At the crowded gangway they kissed good-bye,
He had half a mind to scold her.
An officer's mother and not keep dry
The epaulet on his shoulder

He had forgotten mother and fame,
His mind in a blood-mist floated,
But when reeling back from carnage they came,
One told him; "You are Promoted!"

His friend smiled up from the wet red sand,
The look was afar, eternal,
But he tried to salute with his shattered hand:
"Room now for another colonel!"

Again he raged in that lurid hell
Where the country he loved had thrown him.
"You are promoted!" shrieked as shell.
His mother would not know him.

YEAR OF THE VISION

(1893)

Is there no ivy greener than the rest,
No amaranth from shadowy isles Elysian,
That we may lay upon thy snow-heaped breast,
Year of the Vision?

For thou hast touched this people to a grace
That half rebukes the solitary ditty.
All men were poets for one brief, bright space
In the White City.

Beyond the circle of her glistening domes
A bitter wind swept by to waste and wither.
A cry went up from hunger-smitten homes,
But came not hither.

So fair she stood, imparadised within
Her own delight, as film of elfin labor,
A moonshine fabric, far from stain and din
Of her dark neighbor.

And yet Chicago, from her troubled gloom,
Young daughter of the young, undaunted nation,
Breathed in this evanescent lily-bloom
Heart-aspiration.

For through all stress of the material strife,
The greed, the clash, the coarse, unlovely fashion,
America bears on to sweeter life
And purer passion.

Oh, sting our souls with this diviner need
And, ere thou fadest, take our high decision
To make thy radiant dream immortal deed,
Year of the Vision.

The American Coast

Our eager vessel flings a foam
That dazzles with the setting sun.
A thousand voices talk of home;
Our voyage is almost done.

Not for the gracious green of English meadows,
Not for the fragrances of hawthorn lanes,
Not for the fall of soft, remembering shadows
Our desolated fanes,
O our own land.,
Freedom's throne land,
Line of lilac on the sea ,
Would we give our hearts from thee

The west is gold as daffodils
With sudden rifts that seem to ope
On emerald forest, opal hills
And lawns heliotrope

Not for a Riviera full of roses,
Not for an Andalusia full of sun ,
Not for a dreaming Orient that reposes
Where hushed waters run,
O our own land.,
Freedom's throne land,
Line of lilac on the sea ,
Would we give our hearts from thee