

FAR NORTH SONNETS

John Ashe

To the Barron Falls in Flood

Oh mighty Barron, how your thundrous roar
Drowns the whole hearing in a fearful flood,
Making the listener gaze in breathless awe
At such a frenzied rush of froth and mud.
Down the ravine, in never-ceasing song
You headlong hurl, a heaving tide untrained,
Unbridled, bubbling, wild, you plunge along,
Delirious in your passion unrestrained.
Churning and turning in majestic rage
You mock at me, my Lilliputian ways,
And teach me better than the wisest sage
How impotent I am and short my days,
While endless, you in strength and days abound,
Oh rich, sonorous, symphony of sound!

To Lake Barrine
(*Extinct volcano crater*)

Blue Lake Barrine, whose waters seem asleep;
 Oh magic mirror, scene of quiet rest,
 What secret locked beneath your eerie deep
 Could you unfold, that man has merely guessed?
 Where now the tropic jungle meets your shores
 And over all there broods a silent spell,
 Where ferns and moss disguise once fiery jaws,
 Long ages past you were a part of Hell.
 With diabolic drumming, you would hurl
 Hot death, from deep within the bowels of earth,
 While high above dark sulphurous clouds would curl
 In days before mankind was given birth.
 Who would believe the hand of Hell had been
 Upon this picturesque and placid scene!

To a Giant Kauri

Oh giant kauri pine, that towers on high
 Above the tropic jungle, monarch grand,
 Whose majesty description must defy,
 Throughout full fifteen hundred years you stand
 And so, with slumbrous growth, amass such size.
 When Rome was sacked by the barbarians dread
 A seed in this damp soil did burst to rise
 Amid the shadows of the plants long dead,
 And upwards, through dense growth, to greet the sun
 You slowly, surely, reared your lofty wood;
 While History filled her pages with deeds done
 You here, oblivious of it all, have stood.
 Yet life so blameless makes the heart strings sing
 As I look up to you, oh forest king!