

On the Brink of Eternity

Poems by Clara
Rummel



Clara Jo Rummel
(circa 1900)

Round Top and Austin, Texas

Edited by Gilbert A. Franke

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Edited by Gilbert A. Franke
Translations by Kurt A. Franke
with special thanks to Paul Duderstadt

ISBN: 9798481922799

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[www.gilbertfranke.com]

Bellville, TX 77418

editor's note

This project began as I met with a small group of poets in the Rummel Haus of the Round Top Family Library where we reviewed and discussed our poetry. Laura Quinn Guidry, one of the members of our group, told me that Clara Rummel, a poet herself, had grown up in that house, but none of her poetry was available. Knowing that I have common ancestry with the Rummels of Round Top, Texas, I began asking relatives if they knew where her poetry might be found.

In October 2019, at the C. S. Bauer Family Reunion, I learned that these poems were preserved safely in the possession of Paul Duderstadt, a great-great nephew of the poet, Clara Johanna Rummel. Paul graciously shared them with me. I have assembled her English poetry in an arbitrary fashion, in three groups: newspaper clippings, typed pages, and handwritten notes.

Several poems are included twice, from handwritten and from typed or newspaper sources. This probably indicates an early and a finished form. In most cases there are no dates associated with Clara's English poetry. One notable exception is "Resignation" from her time at the Mayo Clinic (*Rochester, MN., April 18, 1924*).

Clara's German poetry is last, although it is her earlier writing. It is all from handwritten script originals. My nephew, Kurt Franke,* has provided a transcription of the script (*with the long S - f and the Scharfs S - ß*) and a literal translation.

I have attempted an English poetic rendering. I tried to match Clara's meter and rhyme scheme as closely as possible. The German and English are placed on facing pages so the reader can compare them. There are more German poems yet to be translated. They will be added in a second edition.

- Gilbert A Franke**

* Kurt is Clara's second cousin, three times removed.

** Gilbert is Clara's second cousin, twice removed.

For genealogy, please see *A Goodly Heritage, 5th Edition*, editor, Evelyn Albrecht Garland, 2021

Clara Johanna Rummel

Clara was the second youngest of five children, two boys and three girls, born to Carl William, Jr. and Clara Hildebrandt Rummel in Round Top, Texas in 1876. Clara's father, known as William, owned a lumber mill and a cotton gin in Round Top so the family was fairly well off. Clara, with three of her siblings, went to the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904. Clara's sister, Lily, wrote a journal of their trip. After high school, Clara became a teacher of elementary students in different little towns around Round Top, including Bell's Settlement. Her family has some of her class pictures. Although she was attracted to several boys, not one of them materialized into a beau. In one of her letters, she bemoans that Lily was always the sunshine while she was always the moonshine. Though Clara seems to have been away from the family quite often, she kept in contact with Lily by writing letters. A number of them are still available. She also came home during holidays. At some point, she graduated from the University of Texas in Austin, most likely living at her sister Lena's boarding house. She then acquired a job with the Texas Department of Education, but the exact nature of her duties is not known. Failing health greatly limited her abilities and caused a great deal of her care to fall on Lena. In 1924 Clara traveled to the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota in hopes of finding a cure for her problem. She died of lung cancer in 1926.



Clara Jo Rummel is second from the left.

newspaper clippings

November on the Plains

By Clara Jo Rummel

403 East Eighth Street, Austin, Texas

Wild geese, with wearied wing and homesick honk,
A penciled arrow point on deep blue sky,
In search of clime where sings the mocking-bird,
Unswervingly towards their goal they fly.

Cold Northwinds sweep over plains of endless gray,
Gaunt shadows chase through rifts of fading light,
And twilight chill shrouds Mother Earth in gloom,
While Frost is turning mist to diamonds bright.

An awesome, solemn stillness in the air –
The breaking clouds show glimmering stars of night,
A full moon, cold and silvery, haunts the sky,
Stark sage-brush, rustling, puts a lonely hare to flight.

(handwritten date - Feb. 5 - 1926 - Feb. 7)

CARD OF THANKS

We wish to express our sincere thanks and deepest appreciation to our friends for their sympathy during the illness and death of our baby daughter, Agnes Lucile. We want to thank the contributors of the many beautiful floral offerings, the choir for the songs rendered, and especially Rev. Roesener for his consoling words. The help of and sympathy from our friends will ever be a consoling power in our memory. May God bless you all.

TO LITTLE AGNES

God sent an angel from the sky,
To stay with us a while,
To show to us the way to Heaven,
With childish faith and smile.

But now He's called her home again
She could no longer stay--
We must not weep, "but let us be,
Dear Lord, like her, we pray."
St. Martin's Luther League

MR. AND MRS. PAUL HOEKE
AND DAUGHTER, MARGARETTE.

(handwritten name - "Mrs Bowman")

RESIGNATION

By Clara Rummel, Austin

I stand on the brink of Eternity,
 Before me a vast, endless void.
I gaze, I wonder, I ask myself,
 “What will it hold, this other world?”

Behind me a life that throbbed with joy,
 And loved ones that beckon me “stay!”
But the Master has willed a cross on me,
 And Faith prompts, “Do not falter, obey.”

Thus I bow to my Lord with bended knee,
 Resigned, I shall shoulder my cross,
To be led by the Man of Galilee--
 Determined to follow his course.

I leave it to Him my steps to retrace,
 Or to guide me across the vale,
I feel the firm clasp of my Father’s hands,
 I am waiting, dear Lord, without fail.

UNDER ETHER
*By Clara Jo Rummel,
Austin, Texas*

They rock me to sleep in a birch-bark boat,
In tropical clime, on a foreign shore;
My brow is cooled by an ostrich-plumed fan
In the languid hands of a dream-eyed Moor.
And a vampire bat and a tse-tse fly,
They fan him to death, and alone am I.

The vampire bat mounts the helm of the boat,
But the tse-tse fly comes soaring to me;
The moorings are loosened, with whirling wings
The bat steers the boat on an inky sea.
The tall reeds rattle a tune to the fly,
The lotus lilies nod me a goodbye.

On an inky sea 'neath a dusky sky,
I grapple with death, for the tse-tse fly
Has fastened its fangs, its victim am I.

TAPS

Slowly the cortege moves up the street
To the beat of muffled drum,
To a funeral march, and the tramp of feet,
And hushed is the city's hum.

Slowly the procession wends its way
To halt at an open grave.
The flag-draped casket has disappeared--
The last of a soldier brave.

Then "taps," requiem-like, solemn, and long,
Proclaims a soldier at rest:
Its echoes rise to aeons unknown,
"Oh, soldier, thy memory is blest!"

- *Clara Jo Rummel*

WHITE CARNATION

By Clara Jo Rummel, Austin

Thou, white carnation, beckon'st me
 To kneel again at memory's shrine,
To live again in meditation
 Those bygone days with mother mine.

Thy spicy fragrance, sweetest flower,
 Like incense seems, in terms divine,
To breathe a message to me, waiting,
 To feel your presence, mother mine.

Thy snowy petals, white carnation,
 Symbolic seem of prayer sublime -
I consecrate this holy hour
 To memories sweet, fond mother mine.

THE CITY KID'S LAMENT

By Clara Jo Rummel, Austin

I wish I had a cotton gin,
Like they've one in the sky,
With clouds and clouds of soft white lint,
Rolled by the wind so high.

I'd weave it into overalls,
For little boys like me -
We'd box and swim, and romp and play,
Yet we'd ne'er dirty be.

And gingham frocks for little girls,
We'd have a playground gay;
If I could reach things from the sky,
But 'tis too far away.

ECLIPSE

By Clara Jo Rummel, Austin

Fair Sol and Luna appointed a day
In the heavens for love's rendezvous,
The East at dawn marked the trysting place,
The planets watched, and the whole world knew.

They observed all rules of the social code,
For there's etiquette e'en among stars -
They asked the strongest as chaperons,
Who were Mercury, Venus and Mars.

But those rules worked there as they do on earth -
The lovers met at the chosen nook,
But the world was too dark, it could not see,
The chaperons flirted and forgot to look.

THE CRY OF THE SOUL

Not that man will contribute to greatness
Who was born with desires fulfilled,
'Tis he who has seethed in life's crucible
With deep yearnings of a soul unstilled.

'Twas the cry of a soul in its anguish,
That gave rise to the song, "Home, Sweet Home,"
By one who had dreamed of a love-nest
But was destined his life's path to roam.

'Twas the cry of a soul, 'kin to deathblow
Which transformed the child into a man,
In the life moment of our great Martyr
When he called for a Father in vain.

'Twas the cry of a soul that ignited
The spark of genius into fame,
In the poet whose heart lay writhing
'Unrequited by love's scourging flame.

And always 'tis the yearning, the pining,
Of the soul in life's crucible-test,
That wakens to daring and doing
Latent powers in man for the best.

CLARA RUMMEL

AN INVALID'S INTERPRETATION OF RAINDROPS

By Clara Jo Rummel, Austin

Raindrops, I hear your gentle tapping
Like tiny fingers on my window-pane;
I open my eyelids wearily,
But to find thousands of tear-drops of rain.

Raindrops! I hear your pattering feet
Like wee children's, on the roof at play,
Like fleeing footsteps in sudden fright,
Haunted by fairy tale ghosts by day.

Raindrops! I hear your soft lullabies
As from leaf to leaf and limb you leap;
Raindrops! I thank you, dear little things,
You have sung, you have soothed me to sleep.

AUTUMN MOOD
By Clara Jo Rummel
Austin, Texas

A blue gauzy veil hovers over the hills
That line the cliffs of the Colorado stream;
The Master has painted the landscape in Delft,
Glinted by rifts of a pale autumn sun's gleam.

Indian summer, soft-soled, glides through the woods,
Tossing purple and scarlet leaves in the air:
Long golden threads float and glisten in the sun,
Spun by a shuttle that plies no one knows where.

I watch from my window the red-disked sun
Slip down the horizon like a flaming band;
Pink streamers tremble on the sky, like Heimweh
Peering through fingers of a vanishing hand.

Crimson the sky, dusk creeps over the hills,
Like heart blood, drenched in the anguish of years -
I press two hot hands to my eyes, for I ween
A soul-bruised woman bravely smiling through tears.

TO 1924

By Clara Rummel, Austin

Another year in my casket
Of mem'ries has been stored away,
To be reviewed in the future
When I am at leisure, some day.

Each year represents a volume
Stored away on the shelf of life;
Each holds its joys and its heartaches
Which, on re-reading, will revive

Fond memories, long forgotten.
And the problems I could not solve
Will be answered in the echoes
Of the years the past will engulf.

And those that I can not fathom,
An anguished heart still ponders "Why?"
I leave in faith to my Father
To await his final reply.

And the best of it all, these books,
When once closed at my Master's will -
No one can surmise their pages
Of a throbbing heart then grown still.

WISHBONE OR BACKBONE?

By Clara Rummel, Austin

Wishbone or backbone--
Which did you grow?
There's a great difference
Between the two.

Backbone means doing,
Success achieved;
Wishbone means failure,
Yourself deceived.

Don't waste in wishing
Your precious time,
But reach by doing
Your goal sublime.

LENT

By Clara Rummel, Austin

“Where standest thou?” Your Christ asks you
Each year, with the approach of Lent.

“Dost bear with me the martyr’s cross
To Calvary, in prayer bent?”

“Which one in spirit dost thou live,
The Christian or the Pharisee,
Or, worst of all, like Herod art
Defamer, or Sadducee?

Which one doth represent thy heart--
The mob that shouted “Crucify!”
Or doth it doubt like Caiphas;
Like Pilate, voice the coward’s lie?

Whose part dost take beneath the Cross--
Iscaiot’s, who betrayed God’s son,
Or Peter’s, who denied him thrice,
Or John’s who stayed faithful alone?

These are the questions he hath asked
Through all the ages during Lent.
Thy soul alone can answer them,
Thy faith decides, “Where do I stand?”

EASTER MESSAGE

There's a swelling, a budding, a bursting of leaves,
There's a humming, a crooning, like soft lullabies,
There's a waving, a whisp'ring in the trees above,
There's a message sweet hidden in Nature's bright eyes.

But the whispers, soft, grow into raptures of joy,
It is spring's awakening from chill winter's breath,
It is swelling earth into ecstasy untold
With the glad message of Life's Vict'ry over Death.

The Universe reverberates, exultant with song,
"The Lord has risen!" then His sweet promise divine;
"I am the Resurrection and the Life!" which is,
Immortality of man's soul, eternal, sublime!

SWEET PEAS

*By Clara Jo Rummel
Austin, Texas*

*"Top o' the morning," the sweet peas sing
To the caressing breeze, at break of day,
From wiry trellis of garden beds,
Gracefully poised, like butterflies gay.*

*Dew drops sparkle from their petals bright
Of Easter-egg colors, painted by spring;
Their fragrance beguiles a passer-by
Into snatching a nose-gay on the wing.*

*Sweet peas, you have put new joy in my heart,
And wander-lust urges through throbbing veins
To shake my burdens and leave all cares
For a tramp through the woods and the country lanes.*

THE SOUL OF A ROSE

By Clara Jo Rummel, Austin

A wonderful bud in a slender vase,
 With petals like a prayer, folded close;
It held a message from a loving friend
 Tucked away in the heart of that rose.

But after some time that rosebud fair
 Began to open, to droop, and to die;
But ere it was spent, the soul of that rose
 Was wafted on its fragrance to the sky.

typed notes

My dear Mrs. Harwell: -

These lines are dedicated to you in fond appreciation of your steadfast spirit and the inspiration you have proved to your fellow-men through life and your fellow-sufferers at the La Grange Hospital.

By one of the many that love you,

Clara Jo Rummel, Austin.

.....

A Tribute

You cast your bread upon the waters
On tides of time, year after year,
Each crumb returning, floating to you,
Bears message of some deed of cheer.

For all your words in kindness spoken,
The many tears that you have dried,
Have borne their fruits of blessings for you,
Have gained for you friends, staunch and tried.

I look to you in admiration,
I pray that I may be like you,
To learn to bear my Cross in silence,
To be, like you, a Christian true.

(handwritten note on the same page)

Dear Lily: - This goes to Grandma Harwell. I do not know if I have her address right, but hope she will get it. This is your sample of it.

I am in bed again. Have absolutely no vitality left, and pleurisy again with an awful cough.

To Mother's Friend

Dear Friend, with reverend thought I place
A wreath for you at Memory's shrine;
I mourn your passing as a friend
So dear to me and Mother mine.

You were the last remaining link
Between the Present and the Past;
I miss you, yet sweet solace find -
Your yearning soul is stilled at last.

handwritten

*Health Certificate
Cough Medicine
Heart & Kidneys
What to tell doctors up there?*

Thanks

Novak's Umbrella Poem:

Dear Mrs. Schmidt: -

I thank you for remembering me
Out of the kindness of your heart;
It was a pleasure to stay with you,
I was sorry we had to part.

!But listen to me!

Only when the sun is shining
Shall I use my new umbrella;
But when it starts to pouring down
I will get me some nice fellow
To hold his old one over me,
For mine is far to good, you see.

Miss Pola's

Since you were absent when I left my case,
I shall use this means of communication -
Let me thank you for remembering me
And assure you of my appreciation.

Sweet Peas

“Top of the morning!” The sweet peas sing
To the caressing breeze, at the break of day,
From wiry trellis of garden beds,
Gracefully poised, like butterflies gay.

Dewdrops sparkle from their petals bright
Of Easter-egg colors, painted by spring,
Their fragrance beguiles a passerby
Into snatching a nose-gay on the wing.

Sweet peas, you have put new joy in my heart
And wanderlust urge through my throbbing veins,
To shake my burdens and leave all cares
For a tramp through the woods and country lanes.

- *Clara Jo Rummel*

The Air-Scout's Thoughts on Spring

Oh, never more blithesome heart than mine,
As I rise to vast heights from meadow's green,
To soar like a lark in the morning sun,
That throws over the world its golden sheen.

The landscape looks like an artist's palette,
With blotches of red, and yellow, and blue;
They are the flowers that Nature unfolds,
That God has painted for me and for you.

I see green hills girded by silvery streams,
And mounds, like dotted Swiss, of new-mown hay;
The browsing herds fleck the vast, wide plain,
And flocks of sheep gather in tufts of gray.

A playhouse of living toys seems the world,
In its miniature spring setting gay;
I wonder if God made the planets all
That each angel might claim one for play?

But as I rise even beyond the clouds,
I feel that He who created the spring,
Will watch over me and every soul
For he is a part of each living thing.

- Clara Jo Rummel

The Silent Slate

Ah, silent slate - how sad a theme
Your sight to me does brook!
Your face - or does it but so seem?" -
Meets mine with mournful look.

It seems to ask, "When will again
Those little, chubby hands
Rewrite, as oft before, that name
'learved (*sic*) on my rim now stands?"

That darkhaired head - when will again
It bend in thought o'er me?
This knife, with which these lines he ran,
Where's it and where is he?"

Ah, silent slate! - Once more I gaze
'pon thee - my farewell token -
I press my hands upon thy face
In response to words unspoken.

And tears a prayer prompt forth from me
That, as Time will here erase
That name, let it recorded be
In Heaven, to keep its place.

Dedicated to my little pupil "Willie Wolff" after his death, Apr. 1909; on entering the school-house the following morning I found his little slate on my desk, hence this poem.

Thoughts

“Luck is a mocker; - it leaves you the moment you think you have reached the height of ambition, and grasps you when you expect to cross the thresh-hold of despair.” - 1900 (*Bell's Settlement School*)

Each year of our Existence is a leaflet
In the golden Book of Life
And according to the actions and deeds of ours
Wrought on its pages
Will be our record in Heaven and
Our reward thereof awaiting us
in the Hereafter. - *Jan. 9, 1906*

“Though years divide the Past and Present,
Memory spans the Bridge between Life and
Death and clings to it as it does to all that is
dear and sacred to us in life.” - *Christmas
1908, also*

“Christmas and all such holidays are to some
but reminders of sadness, and the merrier the
day the deeper the pangs of recollection thrill
the chords of our hearts.” (*Mrs. Blake's letter*)

Lilies at my feet are like a trembling, zuekeudes
hirz, crushed, and the stretch of blue
sea, reflecting the azure of the sky, like
a greeting out of eternity, the blending
of the real, known, with the fathom-
less, undiscovered, unknown.

Plea

Let down the shades of evening,
Shut out the sunshine bright.
My heart is steeped in sadness,
I cannot bear the light.

Have but a little patience
With me, dear Lord, I pray,
Until I grasp its meaning,
Until I find my way.

And then, I know, more firmly
To thee my faith will cling.
Thou hadst to strike the heart strings,
To give the soul true ring.

Under Ether

They rock me to sleep in a birch-bark boat,
In tropical clime, on a foreign shore;
My brow is cooled by an ostrich-plumed fan
In the languid hands of a dream-eyed Moor.
But a vampire bat and a tse-tse fly
They fan him to death, and alone am I.

The vampire bat mounts the helm of the boat,
But the tse-tse fly comes soaring to me;
The moorings are loosened, with whirling wings
The bat steers the boat on an inky sea.
The tall reeds rattle a tune to the fly,
The lotus flowers nod me a fond goodbye.

On an inky sea, 'neath a dusky sky,
I grapple with death, for the tse-tse fly
Has fastened its fangs, its victim am I.

*April 18, 1924, Rochester, Minn. At the Mayo Clinic
waiting for the verdict of the Fluoroscope and X-ray
order. (Martin Hotel)*

Resignation

I stand on the brink of Eternity -
Before me a vast, endless void.
I gaze, I wonder, I ask myself,
"What will it hold, this other world?"

Behind me a life that throbbed with joy,
And loved ones that beckon me "Stay,"
But the Master has willed a cross for me
And Faith prompts, "Do not falter; obey."

Thus I bow to my Lord with bended knee,
Resigned, I shall shoulder my Cross.
To be lead by the Man of Galilee
Determined to follow his course.

I leave it to Him my steps to retrace,
Or to guide me across the vale -
I feel the clasp of my Father's firm hand,
"I am waiting, dear Lord. I shall not fail."

German poems

These poems were written in German script on ledger pages. They have been transcribed to text by Kurt Franke, Clara's second cousin, three times removed, who also provided a translation. The rendering into English poetic form was done by the editor. They are entered in chronological order by date of composition.

Mein Sonnenschein!
Mein sonniger Frühlingsmorgen
Kost' ich dir Herz' in 'm' Worteslaut
Mein ein gelbtes Sonnenschein
Der Lächeln ist in der Augen mein
Und die Augen sind so tief und klar
Gleichen dem Morgenmorgen auf dem andern
Die Augen so tief und klar
Als wären sie ⁱⁿ Morgenrot
Und ich sie schenke mir die Hand
Der sie noch hat bis zu dem letzten
Morgen und ich sie zum letzten
(Der Morgen Sonnenschein weiß zu werden
's war die Zeit die der Zeit am der Augen
Und die Frühlingsmorgen so sie
Sinn der Augen! - ich die Augen ist
Und ich ist die Zeit in der Augen so tief
Wie ist die Zeit - die Augen -
Denn nur immer die 'Morgen
Und ich ist sie tief: Willst du mich

Kannst du mir ein paar Annahmen machen?"

- Eine Hebräer Gesellschaft in der Nähe von

Mein Hebräerwörterbuch in der Nähe von

Mein Hebräerwörterbuch: "Die Hebräer sind die

Ursprünge der Hebräer in der Nähe von

Und in der Nähe von der Hebräer Gesellschaft

So wie die Hebräer in der Nähe von

Und die Hebräer in der Nähe von

Und die Hebräer in der Nähe von

Und die Hebräer in der Nähe von

"Die Hebräer sind die Hebräer!" (1894)

Mein sonnenchein!

Wie wahrer Frühlings sonnenchein
Traf eines Tag's sie in's Vaterhaus mein!
Wie ein goldener Sonnenstrahl
Ihr Lächeln sich in das Herz mein stahl
Und die Augensterne so tief und blau
Gleichend dem Vergessmeinnicht auf dustender Au'
Die Wangen so rosig angehaucht
Als wären sie in Morgenroth getaucht. --
Und als sie schwebte vor dem Pfad entlang
Der sich vom Teich bis zu den Linden hinschlang
Vernahm auch ich jenen süssen Zauberton:
(So manches Menschenherz weiß zu wenden davon)
's war die Lieb die da pocht an das Herz mein
Und wie Frühlingswehen zog sie hinein.
Einen Augenblick! -- ihren Namen ich rief
Und schaut ihr dabei in den Augen so tief,
Wie ist doch die Lieb' -- bloß anzuseh'n --
Kann man einander ohn' Worte versteh'n
Und als ich sie frug: "Willst werden Du mein
Immer und ewiger Sonnenschein?"
Eine Thräne fahl sich in's Auge blau
Wie Vergißmeinnicht im frischen Morgenthau.
Wie Fuß erklangs: „Seit mein Aug' dich erschaut
Kündet ein Ton dich in meinem Herzen laut.“
Und in den Zweigen über uns schlug die Nachigall an
So eigenartig wie nur sie es kann.
Und die Linden erzählten von vergangenen Tagen
Von manchen Herzen, die sich da fanden, müßten sie zu fagen
Und in unf'ren Augen fand's gegenseitig geschrieben
„An dich will ich glauben, dich ewig lieben!“

Sept. 1894.

My Sunshine!

Like purest sunshine in the spring
she came into my father's house to bring
her glowing smile, a golden ray
that quickly stole my heart away.
Her eyes so deep and blue to me
like forget-me-nots on a fragrant lea.
Her cheeks were touched with a rosy tint
as if they were dipped in morning's red glint.
She glided along the winding track
from the pond to the linden trees and back.
I too heard the sweet magical notes
that have turned so many human hearts.
It was love that made my throbbing heart beat,
a spring breeze that swept me off my feet.
In a moment - I called her name in surprise.
I gazed so deeply into her eyes.
Such is love - just one look so grand -
without a word you understand.
Then as I asked her, "Will you be mine,
forever and always, my only sunshine?"
a tear drop brightened her eye so blue
like a forget-me-not in the morning dew.
She answered so sweetly: "When I see you each time,
a clear note rings out in this heart of mine."
From the branches above us the singular trill
of the nightingale captured our momentous thrill.
The linden tree whispered of days long past,
of hearts once forgotten, that were now holding fast.
In our eyes we could see a mutual endeavor:
"I'll trust you always and love you forever!"

Verlorenes Glück

Sag´ Menschenherz, was hilft dein klagen,
Meinst du dein Leid sei nicht zu ertragen?
Schau´ um dich, Herz, so wird´s sither(?) sein
das -- verglichen zu And´ren -- dein´s ist klein.
„Auch sie hatte es erfahren, das Mütterlein,
das weilte ann,arm,am(?) umrehten Fensterlein
Umwogt von des Frühlingssonnenstrahlen,
Von Veilcheindüften die sich zu ihr staflen.

Noch strahlte ihr Auge im alten Licht,
Noch reihte sich Locke(?) an Löckchen dicht,
Doch darüber hin ergos sich des Alter´s Schnee*
Und in dem milden Antlitz malte sich ein bitt´res Weh.
Eben jetzt trat jener(?) Zug noch schärfer hervor
Und wie flehend hob sie die Hände empor--
Denn vorbei schreitet soeben ein Liebespärenchen,
Wie mahnte sie das an ein altes Märchen.

Ein Märchen war´s? -- Ach, leider nein!
Nur bitt´re Wahrheit blieb es allein.-
Ihre Gedanken schweifen in die Vergangenheit zurück
Und weben sich ein in ihr verlor´nes Glück.
Wie hatte auch sie einst so fast vertraut
Nicht ahnend das. sie habe auf Falschheit gebaut
Doch es kam ein Tag, Da brach ihr Herz,
kein Trost war zugänglich ihrem Schmerz.

Wie jetzt, so trat der Frühling in´s Land,
Freude und Kummer an seiner Hand-
Ein Tag brach an voll Blütenpracht
Ueberall wacht geltend sich des Frühlings Macht*.
Wie jetzt schaut sie aus ihrem Fensterlein,
Wie eine Blume: so hold, so zart, so rein!
So fröhlich und heiter ist ihr um´s Herz
Sie ahnt nicht den nahenden, herten Schmerz.

Lost Happiness

Tell me, dear heart, what's the use of complaining?
Do you think your suffering is all that's remaining?
Look around you, my heart, at one and all.
Compared with others, yours is small.
She also has known it, the little mother
waiting under the window's vine cover
bathed in the rays of the spring sunshine.
The fragrance of violets brings it to her mind.

Still her eyes beam with a youthful light.
Her locks and curls hold together tight
but now they are aged and white as snow,
her mild visage painted by a bitter woe.
Just now that feature is clearer to see
as she raises her hands in a silent plea
for a pair of lovers is walking there.
How it reminds her of an old fairy tale!

Was it only a fable? - O, alas, no!
The bitter truth is left standing alone.
Her thoughts wander back to days gone by
and weave a tapestry of the joy that would die.
Once she thought she had found her beloved,
not knowing she had built on his false pledge of love.
Then came a day when her heart would break
with no comfort found to relieve the ache.

Just as now, springtime came to the land
with joy and sorrow on either hand -
That day dawned with the splendor of flowers
awakened everywhere by spring's nascent powers.
Just as now, from her little window she leaned
like a flower: so graceful, so tender, so clean!
Her heart was happy and filled with cheer;
she could hardly imagine the pain that was near.

Da tönt vom Kirchthurm Glockenklang herüber
Und wehmütig schweift ihr Blick hinüber-
Es schreitet vorüber ein alter Mann
Grüssend will er weiter, doch sie ruft ihn an:
„Hört, lieber Mann, könnt Ihr mir sagen
Wer heut´zur letzten Ruhstatt wird getragen?“
Gross schaut er sie an, spricht: „Holde Maid,
des Goldschmied´s Sohn feiert heut Hochzeit.“

Verschwunden vom Fenster ist das holde Köpfchen
Zur Antwort rollt auf die Stras´ein Blumentöpfchen.
Und während draussen werden die Rösslein gepflückt
Ist drinnen ein Knösplein* auf ewig geknickt.
Vorbei, vorbei! Ihr Tugendtraum-
Zerwest ist er wie lanter Schaum!
Im Augenblick da seine Glücksstund geschlagen
Ward ihre Lebensfreud´zu Grabe getragen.

Ach hätte man heut´mich da draussen gefettet*
So hätte kein Leid mehr an diese Welt mich gekettet-!
Und Thrän´ auch Thrän´ rollt die blasse Wang herab
Wie Thau auf ihres Glückes Grab.-
Doch die Zeit, die Zeit- was vollbringt sie nicht?
Wol erscheint ihr Leben in anderem Licht
Doch waren ihr noch sonnige Tage beschieden
Und endlich fand auch ihre arme Seele Frieden.“

Juni, 1895

** difficulty deciphering handwriting*

Bells in the church tower rang out their sound.
She gazed wistfully as she turned around –
Just then an old man was striding by.
He waved and walked on, but she gave a cry:
“Listen, dear man, what can you say?
Who is carried to his last rest today?”
He looked in surprise. “Gracious maid,” he said,
“today the goldsmith’s son is wed.”

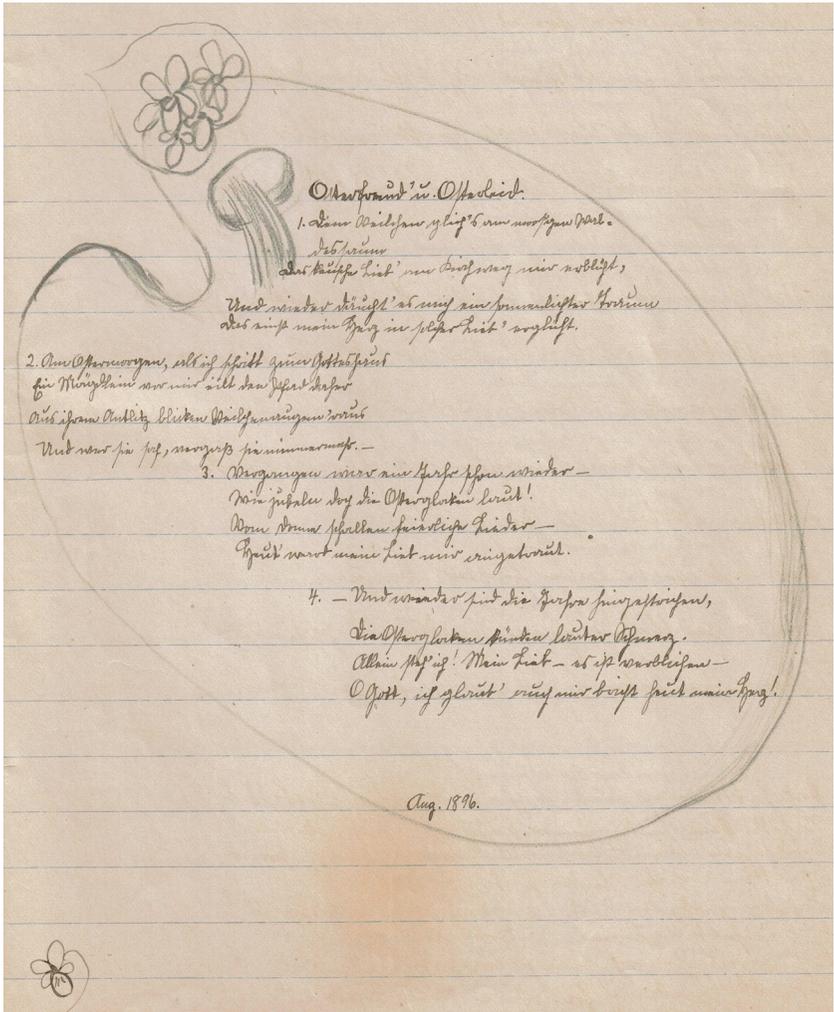
The lovely head in the window made a fast retreat
as a flowerpot rolled out into the street.
While outside blossoms of roses were picked
inside a little bud was forever nicked.
All gone, all gone! Her virtuous dream.
It all disappeared like so much steam.
In the very same moment his happiness was found
her joy for life was buried in the ground.

“Oh, if only I’d not looked outside today
I would not be chained to this world’s pain!”
Tear after tear rolls down that fair face
like dew that covers the grave of her bliss.
But time, yes, the time – what does it not do?
Now her life appears in a different hue
for the sunny days she is granted are best
and finally her poor soul will find rest.



Clara Rummel and niece, Clara Dornberger - 1911

Clara's sketch illustrating 'Osterfreud' und 'Osterleid'



Osterfreud´ u. Osterleid

Dem Veilchen glich´ s am moof´ gen Waldesfaum
Das keufche Lieb´ am Kirchweg mir erblüht,
Und wieder däucht es mich ein fomnnenlichter Traum
Das einft mein Herz in folcher Lieb´ erglüht.

Am Ostermorgen, als ich fchritt zum Gotteshaus
Ein Mägdlein vor mir eilt den Pfad daher
Aus ihrem Antlitz blicken Veilchenaugen´ raus
Und war fie fah, vergaß fie nimmermehr. --

Vergangen war ein Jahr fchon wieder --
Wie jubeln doch die Ofterglocken laut!
Vom Dome fchallen feierliche Lieder --
Heut´ ward meine Lieb mir angetraut.

-- Und wieder find die Jahren hingeftrichen,
Die Ofterglocken künden lauter Schmerz.
Allein fteh´ ich! Mein Lieb -- es ist verblichen --
O Gott, ich glaub´ auch bricht heut mein Herz!

- Aug. 1896.

Easter Joy and Easter Sorrow

Like violets* at the forest's mossy bound
chaste ardor blossomed on my way to church.
Still now it seems a dream of sunshine all around
to think my heart once glowed with love's bright torch.

On Easter morning as I neared the house of God
a maiden hurried toward me at that spot.
Her blue eyes* glancing from her face gave a nod.
Once she was seen, she'd never be forgot -

A year has come and gone already -
How joyfully the Easter church bell sings!
Now from the dome the festive song is steady-
Today my love and I exchanged our rings.

- And now again the years are passed and banished.
The Easter bells toll nothing but my aches.
I stand alone! My love today has vanished -
O God, I think today my heart too breaks!

** The flower is a "Veilchen" or violet, which is usually described as blue in color and is compared to her eyes.*

„Allerfeelen!“

„Tief unter der Linden Schatten
Im Friedhof, mitten d´rin,
Da zieht´s mich immer wieder
Zu jenen Hügeln hin.

Durchtraum´ noch einmal wieder
Mein längst entchwund´nes Glück
Oh, könnt ich´s beten zu mir!
Oh, käm´s noch mal zurück!

Da ift´s als ftiegen leife
Herab zwei Engelein,
Die Händ´ auf´s Haupt mir legend
Segnend die Tränen mein.

Die Geifter meiner Linden
So wie fie kamen, geh´n
Ein Gruß -- ein letztes Neigen --
Sie find nicht mehr zu feh´n.“

~~~~~

Und wieder Allerfeelen!  
Heut´ ift fein Plätzchen leer,  
Ein grüner neuer Hügel -- !  
Er kennt das Leid nicht mehr.

*Mai, 1897.*

## **All Souls' Day**

Deep under the Linden's shadow  
in the graveyard, centered there  
I'm drawn again and always  
to a certain mound so bare

In a dream yet once again  
my joy so long-time gone  
Oh, pray it comes to me!  
Oh, come to me anon!

As if they softly settled  
I feel two angels here.  
They lay their hands on my forehead  
to bless my grieving tears.

The spirits of my Linden  
just as they came, they go  
a greeting - one last curtsy --  
then they are seen no more.

~~~~~

Again it is All Soul's Day!
Today his plot is clear,
a fresh green mound above him - !
He knows no suffering here.

Erst dann!

Erst wann vom Glück Du scheiden mußt
Erscheinen sie Dir doppelt schön
Die Stunden, jetzt erst vollbewußt,
Mit Deinem Glück verloren geh'n.

Erst wann vom Glück Du bist geschieden
Weißt Du was Dir das Schickfal raubte,
Mit ihm entchwand der Seele Frieden,
Das Edle all' an dem sie glaubte.

[rechts, Bleistift]

Doch das ist nicht der Zweck des Lebens
Daß Du entmutigt* ihm entfagst
Im Gegenteil: probt es vergebens?
Das Schickfal, das Du so beklagt?

[durchgestrichen]

Solang Du noch an Glück haft Glauben
Solang bist immer glücklich Du
Wann aber Du Dir den läßt rauben
Ist es vorbei mit Glück und Ruh'.

- 1898

Only Then

Only when joy is wrest from you
the happy hours seem twice as fair
but then they're gone and lost from view
too late before you are aware.

Just when you're severed from your gladness
you come to know what fate has stolen
your spirit's peace replaced by sadness --
all worthy causes you believed in.

But this is not the point of living
that in despair you forfeit life,
instead employing all your being
test the fate that causes strife.

*[In the poet's handwritten copy, the following
stanza was replaced by the preceding one.]*

As long as you believe in pleasure
that long you may still have delight
but when you're cheated of your treasure
then happiness and peace take flight.

Der Unterschied

Mir war's als fchien noch mal fo golden
die Frühlingsfonne um das Haus,
denn zwischen Rof' und Fliederdolden
Lugt frifch ein Kinderantlitz 'raus.

Und als ich wieder ging vorüber
da fchien's gar still und einfam dort,
der Tag mit einem Mal fchien trüber_
das Kinderantlitz war ja fort.

Statt deffen auf dem Friedhof drüben
Wölbt fich ein Hüglein leicht zur Höh'
Wie ein Gebet für feine Lieben -
„Gib' daß ich fie dort wieder feh'!“

- 1900

The Difference

It seemed the golden sun of springtime
once more embraced the house with light;
between the lilac and the rose vine
a child looked out with fresh delight.

But then the next time I went over
it seemed so still and lonely there;
the day was washed in dismal color.
No little face was anywhere.

Instead, the cemetery yonder
revealed a rising mound of clay,
the prayer of loved ones voiced in wonder:
“Grant me to see her in that day.”

Gott schütze Dich!

„Gott schütze Dich! An feiner Hand
Tritt an die neue Bahn,
Und gib Dich selber ihm zum Pfand
So eilft Du himmelan.

Gott schütze Dich! Dies Kreuzlein schlicht
Als Talisman für Dich!
Und was auch kommt, verzage nicht,
Denk´ ftets: „Er führet mich!“

Gott schütze Dich! ift mein Gebet
Das heut´ zieht mit Dir aus-
Gott schütze Dich bis heim es geht
In´s ew´ge Vaterhaus.

*Meiner liebem Elfe an ihrem
Confirmationstage,
März 24, 1907, zum Andenken gewidmet mit
Kreuz u. obiger Infcription.*

God Shelter You

God shelter you! Beneath His hand
Pursue life's path anew,
And pledge yourself for Him to stand.
To heaven hasten you.

God shelter you! This little cross
a talisman for you!
Whatever comes, count not the loss.
Still know: "He goes with you!"

God shelter you! This is my prayer.
Today it goes with you.
God shelter you until you're there
in God's house forever new.

*To my dear Else on her Confirmation day,
March 24, 1907, given as a keepsake with
cross and above inscription.*

The Rummel Home

Clara Johanna Rummel grew up in the home built by her parents, Carl Wilhelm, Jr. and Clara Hildebrandt Rummel in 1871-72. The construction was likely overseen by Carl Siegismund Bauer, Clara Jo Rummel's great-grandfather.



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*Historic American Buildings Survey, Roy Pledger, Photographer, July, 1972
GABLE FACING SOUTHWEST. - Carl Wilhelm Rummel House, First Street,
Round Top, Fayette County, TX*

The Rummel Haus has been carefully restored and now serves as an activity center for the Round Top Family Library, where it is host to “Library Board Meetings, book clubs, poetry clubs, and children’s activities. It is also available to non-profits and local community organizations for meetings and gatherings and for private, non-commercial events.”

*(Round Top Family Library website
[<https://www.ilovetoread.org/about/#history>])*

ILLUSTRATIONS

Front Cover and page 1: Portrait of Clara Johanna Rummel, circa 1900, family archives

Page 5: Clara and three University of Texas classmates, circa 1894, family archives

Page 46 – 47: Script of “Meinen Sonnenschein!,” family archives

Page 54: Clara and niece, Clara Dornberger, 1911, family archives

Page 55: illustration and script of “Osterfreud’ u. Osterleid,” family archives

Page 67: Rummel house, SW corner, Roy Pledger, 1972, Wikimedia

Back Cover: 1) Rummel house, SE corner, Roy Pledger, 1972, Wikimedia

2) Rummel Haus Activity Center, Round Top Family Library, contemporary, Round Top Family Library website [<https://www.ilovetoread.org/>]

