

***LOUISE IMOGEN
GUINEY***



***A ROADSIDE
HARP:
A BOOK
OF VERSES***

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Louise Imogen Guiney

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Peter Rugg the Bostonian

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I

THE mare is pawing by the oak,
The chaise is cool and wide
For Peter Rugg the Bostonian
With his little son beside;
The women loiter at the wheels
In the pleasant summer-tide.
“And when wilt thou be home, Father?”
“And when, good husband, say:
The cloud hangs heavy on the house
What time thou art away.”
He answers straight, he answers short,
“At noon of the seventh day.”
“Fail not to come, if God so will,
And the weather be kind and clear.”
“Farewell, farewell! But who am I
A blockhead vain to fear?
God willing or God unwilling,
I have said it, I will be here.”
He gathers up the sunburnt boy
And from the gate is sped;
He shakes the spark from the stones below,
The bloom from overhead,

Till the last roofs of his own town
Pass in the morning-red.
Upon a homely mission
North unto York he goes,
Through the long highway broidered thick
With elder-blow and rose;
And sleeps in sound of breakers
At every twilight's close.
Intense upon his heedless head
Frowns Agamenticus,
Knowing of Heaven's challenger
The answer: even thus
The Patience that is hid on high
Doth stoop to master us.

II

Full light are all his parting dreams;
Desire is in his brain;
He tightens at the tavern-post
The fiery creature's rein:
"Now eat thine apple, six years' child!
We face for home again."
They had not gone a many mile
With nimble heart and tongue,
When the lone thrush grew silent
The walnut woods among;
And on the lulled horizon
A premonition hung.
The babes at Hampton schoolhouse,
The wife with lads at sea,