



1900

Poem from [John] Muir to Robert Underwood Johnson, undated

John Muir

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A KING OF OUTDOORS

To John Muir.

(Written by Muir to be sent by Helen Muir to Robert Underwood Johnson.)

Once a dreamy old Scotchman his mountains forsook
And came down to a town to make a new book;
Then his friends, strange to say, came by dozens and scores,
And dubbed this old dreamer "The King of Outdoors."

The best of the lot was a wise little girl
Full of fun and odd notions and quick as a squirrel;
And she cried: "What are all you good people about,
Naming King of Outdoors one who seldom goes out!"

Once he lived in the sky-lands with mountains and trees,
Haunted forests and gardens like the bears and the bees,
Loved snowfields and glaciers, rocky canyons and streams,
As you'll learn if you hark when he speaks in his dreams.

And perhaps he may yet be wandering again;
Leave his dog and his garret, his book and his pen,
To read Nature's own book by night and by day,
Finding sermons and psalms where'er he may stray.

Away and Away on his glorious outdoorings,
Light and free as the winds, all wildness exploring;
Sleeping soft in the snow on the mountains afar,
With a cloud for a blanket, for watchman a star.

Once more wild in wildness, with Nature at one,
Alike in the tempest or smiles of the sun,
At home on loved mountains or far foreign shores,
Ah! then ye may call him a King of Outdoors.