

The Collected Verse of Mary Gilmore: 1887-1929 (Academy Editions of Australian Literature)

Jennifer Strauss

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I shall go as my mother went/ The ink still wet on the page

Though probably the only Dame of the British Empire to write a regular column for a Communist newspaper, it was as a poet that Mary Gilmore wanted to be remembered when she died in 1962. She had been publishing poems since the 1880s.

But changing tastes as well as newcomers eager for attention have consigned her to a quiet corner in anthologies of Australian poetry.

This fully annotated variorum edition will make Gilmore's remarkable achievement visible again. Gilmore had over 1360 poems published between 1887 and 1960. Of those, over 500 had never appeared in collections.

Volume 1 brings together many of these poems for the first time, gathered from varied and sometimes inaccessible sources ranging from *The Barrier Miner* to the National Library of Uruguay. These virtually unknown works are complemented by poems from collections including *Marri'd* and *Other Verses* (1910) and *The Passionate Heart* (1918). These collections, selected for different times, tended to showcase her more 'womanly' poems, playing down the harsher, more roughly made poems of social protest. For the first time, these poems stand side by side, and a truer picture of Gilmore's work emerges.

The Collected Verse of Mary Gilmore Volume 1: 1887–1929 is part of the Academy Editions of Australian Literature. The Academy Editions are committed to more than the textual aspects of scholarly editing; they embrace the needs of modern readers by providing the historical introductions and annotations needed in order to engage richly with the literature of a previous age and different culture.

Review excerpt

'... accomplished poems emerged among a sizeable body of verse that is generally considered not to have transcended its time and place. This judgement, however, has usually been made without access to Gilmore's complete published oeuvre, which the Academy Editions of Australian Literature has now made available. The editor, Jennifer Strauss, contributes an illuminating introduction to this first volume and it contains a number of useful indexes, a satisfyingly detailed chronology and a note on the manuscripts.... this book demonstrates the overall competence of her writing and includes a variety of accomplished works. It reveals a feisty and inventive, if not always subtle or original, mind. Gilmore was ahead of her time in her concerns but fairly orthodox in her views on sexual politics. The work collected here helps to define a period when Australian literary culture began to come forcibly into its own.'

— Paul Hetherington, Times Literary Supplement

'That Academy Editions of Australian Literature . . . meets the highest possible standards of scholarly editing and aims to provide reliable reading texts and rigorously researched contextual annotation . . .[Academy

Editions] provide access to the process of transmission of the literary work . . . To say this is a daunting task would be an understatement, yet Strauss has carried it through with authority and meticulous attention to detail.

Jennifer Strauss's excellent scholarly edition enables us to look at the body of work that produced Gilmore's best poems, and the forces that have shaped it. Inclusion of Gilmore's own notes on the poems and Strauss's historical annotation on the subject matter are enlightening, and the chronological presentation of collected and uncollected publications contributes to the cumulative forward movement of the corpus . . . we can look forward to Volume II.'

— Margaret Bradstock, Margin



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