

# JOY

by M. L. Pierce

O Joy, hast thou a shape?  
Hast thou a breath ?  
How fillest thou the  
soundless air?  
Tell me the pillars of thy  
house.

Joy is natural. When nature has done her work without interruption, the soul has peace. It is then that joy is the mainspring of all creation. It becomes the soul as the blue does the sky. It reflects a hidden power as truly as does the northern light. We get it not by seeking, but by doing what God and man expect of us. The man with the ax. The mother with the babe in her arms. The child with a broken toy.

Fortune will not bring it. To have is not to hold. Wealth brings but little of real worth in this world. I sit-by the open window and hear the boys at play-my boys. And wealth, well, what of that? Fortune has no relation to character. Joy is wedded to it. Joys multiply in the presence of humility. They will not abide in the homes of the haughty. All joys are twins. As you break them ;and hand them to another they will be multiplied. That which I keep I destroy. That which I give a neighbor that I retain. Every smile is a message to others. Joy travels in a straight line. When we would have the line return upon ourselves it is broken. The joy-bells of Christmas would ring all the year round, if we lived all the year as we do on Christmas.

Our joys invite disaster. No gossip ever stops at the home of a shrew. Satan was tempted to leave hell by the happiness of two people. The ability to enjoy always brings with it the ability to suffer. The greatest tragedies of all literature hinge upon the crushing of a great joy. He who steals your joy ruins your life. Mrs. Browning says, "Capacity for joy admits temptation."

The joy that should concern us most is present joy. Memory is a blessed thing. If, however, it is used to discount present blessings, it becomes a curse. It is also easy to look into the future wishing that it may bring better than we have known. Many a life is ruined because all of the present joys are passed over, by either the backward or the forward look. Neither can you possess the joys of another. The only time you can live is now. The only joy that you may know is your own.