

James Whitcomb Riley

From a Westerner's point of view.

No matter what you call it,

Whether genius, gift, or art,

He sings the simple songs that come

The closest to your heart.

Fur trim an' skillful phrases,

I do not keer a jot;

'Tain't the words alone, but feelin's,

That tech the tender spot.

An' that's jest why I love him, —

Why, he's got sech human feelin',

An' in ev'ry song he gives us,

You kin see it creepin', stealin'.

Through the core the tears go tricklin',

But the edge is bright an' smiley;

I never saw a poet

Like that poet Whitcomb Riley.

His heart keeps beatin' time with our'n

In measures fast or slow;

He tells us jest the same ol' things

Our souls have learned to know.

He paints our joys an' sorrers

In a way so stric'ly true,

That a body can't help knowin'

That he has felt them too.

If there's a lesson to be taught,

He never fears to teach it,

An' he puts the food so good an' low

That the humblest one kin reach it.

Now in our time, when poets rhyme

For money, fun, or fashion,

'Tis good to hear one voice so clear

That thrills with honest passion.

So let the others build their songs,

An' strive to polish highly, —

There's none of them kin tech the heart

Like our own Whitcomb Riley.