

DUNCAN CAMPBELL SCOTT

## **AFTER A NIGHT OF STORM**

Duncan Campbell Scott (1862-1947) was born in Ottawa, Ontario. He attended high school in Smith's Falls and junior college in Stanstead, Quebec. In 1879 he was appointed to the Department of Indian Affairs, where he remained for the rest of his career. He published eight collections of poems between 1893 and 1935. His work was largely forgotten at the time of his death, although A. J. M. Smith's essay "The Poetry of Duncan Campbell Scott," which appeared in the April 1948 issue, praised "the calm, scholarly, polished quality of his verse, which in its very nature is calculated to appeal to the reflective and knowledgeable few." The following poem was published in the July 1921 issue and included in the collection *Beauty and Life* (1921).

After a night of storm,  
They found her lovely form  
Cast high upon the beach at Spaniard's Bay,  
The only vestige of the stately barque  
That went to pieces in the flashing dark;  
Even at that day  
None knew the vessel's name,  
Or whence it came,  
Or whither it was bound,  
And now no man can know  
For that was long and long ago.

They said she was a wondrous thing to see.  
All dazzling in her bridal dress,  
A miracle of foam and ivory.  
Her satin gown was smoothened by the wave,  
Her rippled ribbons, all her wandering laces

Set in their places.  
Her hands were loosely clasped without a gem,  
But clad with mitts of silken net.  
Diamonds in the buckles of her shoon  
All fairly set,  
And one great brooch, the colour of the moon,  
Held her lace shawl.  
A snood had slipped back from her hair,  
Her face was piteous, so fair, so fair,  
And gleaming small  
Upon her breast there seemed to float  
A wedding ring,  
Threaded upon a crimson and green string  
Around her throat.