

GILEAN DOUGLAS

## REBEL

Gilean Douglas (1900-1993) was born in Toronto, Ontario. She became a reporter at the age of 19 and spent the 1920s and 1930s travelling throughout Europe and North America. In 1938 she moved to British Columbia, where she lived in a cabin on the Coquihalla River and then moved to an abandoned miner's cabin on the Teal River near Duncan. Her cabin was destroyed by fire in 1947, and she then moved to Cortes Island, where she remained for the rest of her life. She published eight collections of poetry and three non-fiction books, and she wrote the column "Nature Rambles" for the *Victoria Colonist* (later the *Times Colonist*) from 1961 to 1992. The following poem was published in the winter 1974-1975 issue.

So I am beaten down because my days  
have run like water through the sieve of time;  
because my heart could never learn to rhyme  
with worldly reason. My exultant ways  
leapt up the hillsides where the rowans blaze  
and topped the summits where the wild goats climb;  
I was a spendthrift of the blood's hot prime  
and profligate of summer's roundelays.

I was—I was! I still am all these things  
that I have loved and fought, the songs I made  
in stark of night as pallid laughter thrown  
over the dead. Life is a friend that wrings  
the outthrust hand and never yet betrayed  
the smile that would not cringe before the stone.