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Lake Desolation

By LEAVENWORTH MACNAB

Wan waves lap listlessly the shape-wrapped shore,
Where barren rocks rear shapeless, cold and gray;
Dead-wind echoes make monotonous roar
Amid the sullen, gruesome caves aplay,
Rousing the ghosts of secrets long since dead.

Pale starshine, pure and passionless, looks down
From out her hazy veil, like silvered snow,
Lending her pallid radiance to crown
The desolation broadcast strown below—
Drear desolation, meet but for the dead.

Athwart the pulseless tide a bird of night—
Spirit, perchance, of what trod once as man—
Circles the gloom for aye in aimless flight,
Returning ever where it first began,
Piercing the stillness with weird notes of wo.

The fenlands rank pour forth their pungent breath—
Poisonous breath with deadly agues fraught—
Whose phosphorescent light, a wraith of death,
Woos wanderers will-o'-the-wisplike to the spot.
Here echoe, too, the night bird's notes of wo.