

**Sussex**  
**Rudyard Kipling**  
**1902**

God gave all men all earth to love,  
But since hearts are small,  
Ordained for each one spot should prove  
Belovèd over all;  
That, as He watched Creation's birth,  
So we, in godlike mood,  
May of our love create our earth  
And see that it is good.

So one shall Baltic pines content,  
As one some Surrey glade,  
Or one the palm-grove's droned lament  
Before Levuka's Trade.  
Each to his choice, and I rejoice  
The lot has fallen to me  
In a fair ground --- in a fair ground ---  
Yea, Sussex by the sea!

No tender-hearted garden crowns,  
No bosomed woods adorn  
Our blunt, bow-headed, whale-backed Downs,  
But gnarled and writhen thorn ---  
Bare slopes where chasing shadows skim,  
And, through the gaps revealed,  
Belt upon belt, the wooded, dim,  
Blue goodness of the Weald.

Clean of officious fence or hedge,  
Half-wild and wholly tame,  
The wise turf cloaks the white cliff-edge  
As when the Romans came.  
What sign of those that fought and died  
At shift of sword and sword?  
The barrow and the camp abide,  
The sunlight and the sward.

Here leaps ashore the full Sou'West  
All heavy-winged with brine,  
Here lies above the folded crest  
The Channel's leaden line;  
And here the sea-fogs lap and cling,  
And here, each warning each,  
The sheep-bells and the ship-bells ring  
Along the hidden beach.

We have no waters to delight  
Our broad and brookless vales ----  
Only the dewpond on the height  
Unfed, that never fails ---  
Whereby no tattered herbage tells  
Which way the season flies ---  
Only our close-bit thyme that smells  
Like dawn in Paradise.

Here through the strong unhampered days  
The tinkling silence thrills;  
Or little, lost, Down churches praise  
The Lord who made the hills:  
But here the Old Gods guard their ground,  
And, in her secret heart,  
The heathen kingdom Wilfred found  
Dreams, as she dwells, apart.

Though all the rest were all my share,  
With equal soul I'd see  
Her nine-and-thirty sisters fair,  
Yet none more fair than she.  
Choose ye your need from Thames to Tweed,  
And I will choose instead  
Such lands as lie 'twixt Rake and Rye,  
Black Down and Beachy Head.

I will go out against the sun  
Where the rolled scarp retires,  
And the Long Man of Wilmington  
Looks naked towards the shires;  
And east till doubling Rother crawls  
To find the fickle tide,  
By dry and sea-forgotten walls,  
Our ports of stranded pride.

I will go north about the shaws  
And the deep ghylls that breed  
Huge oaks and old, the which we hold  
No more than Sussex "weed";  
Or south where windy Piddinghoe's  
Begilded dolphin veers,  
And black beside the wide-banked Ouse  
Lie down our Sussex steers.

So to the land our hearts we give  
Till the sure magic strike,  
And Memory, Use and Love make live  
Us and our fields alike ---

That deeper than our speech and thought,  
Beyond our reason's sway;  
Clay of the pit whence we were wrought  
Yearns to its fellow clay.

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