

BALLADE OF THE GAMEFISH

"Only the gamefish swims upstream."

—Col. John Trotwood Moore

Where the puddle is shallow, the weakfish stay
To drift along with the current's flow;
To take the tide as it moves each day
With the idle ripples that come and go;
With a shrinking fear of the gales that blow
By distant coasts where the Great Ports gleam;
Where the far heights call through the silver glow,
"Only the gamefish swims upstream."

Where the shore is waiting, the minnows play,
Borne by the current's undertow;
Drifting, fluttering on their way,
Bound by a fate that has willed it so;
In the tree-flung shadows they never know
How far they have come from the old, brave dream;
Where the wild gales call from the peaks of snow,
"Only the gamefish swims upstream."

Where the tide rolls down in a flash of spray
And strikes with the might of a bitter foe,
The shrimp and the sponge are held at bay
Where the dusk winds call and the sun sinks low;
They call it Fate in their endless woe
As they shrink in fear when the wild hawks scream
From the crags and crests where the great thorns grow,
"Only the gamefish swims upstream."

ENVOY

Held with the current the Fates bestow,
The driftwood moves to a sluggish theme,
Nor heeds the call which the Far Isles throw,
"Only the gamefish swims upstream."

—Grantland Rice (1880–1954)