

History Tidbits
In Honor of National Poetry Month
A Collection of Poetry from a Dedham Author

By Johanna McBrien

Originally published in the *Dedham Times*, April 23, 2021

The Dedham Historical Society & Museum (DHSM) received a donation of family photographs and poems written from the 1940s through the 1980s by Dedham resident Charlotte Parsons Noyes (1906–2000), a medical assistant and amateur poet. There were not just one or two poems, but volumes of poems that spanned decades. Her subjects mostly included her beloved town of Dedham and New England, her home and family, nature, and the seasons.

Charlotte was a regular poetry contributor to the *Dedham Transcript*, but she cast her net beyond Dedham, also publishing in the *Herald*, *Boston Globe*, and *Patriot Ledger*, among others. In addition to writing poetry, she wrote messages in the 1940s for Rustcraft greeting cards. From 1950–63, she created a newsletter, “A Small Selection,” that included poems she and others authored; she also hosted a local poetry appreciation club. Charlotte also dabbled in photography, receiving honorable mention at a Festival of the Arts presented by the Dedham Art Guild in 1978.

In 1965, Charlotte submitted for consideration the lyrics for the yet undetermined Massachusetts State Song. Her “Massachusetts! Behold Her!” was set to a musical score composed by Bessie Althin Toombs (the original score and lyrics are part of the donation). Alas, in 1966, “All Hail to Massachusetts” by Arthur James Marsh was adopted as the official state song.

The following poems are selected from Charlotte’s “Suburban Souvenir” album. DHSM would like to thank Linnea Bardarson for donating the material on behalf of Charlotte’s son, Hilary.

Appointment with April

The daffodils of Dedham
were shining in the rain;
Against the shadowed
hillsides
we saw their beauty plain
For every golden daffy
the sun had warmly kissed,
and every lovely garden



(Left) *Charlotte Parsons Noyes, circa 1970s.*

Depend On It

New England gives a man
a handshake thin,
Chooses her words most sparingly
before she takes him in—
Yet you may wager life itself
upon an utterance brief,
And that cool handclasp can grow
strong beyond belief!
Despite the swift embraces
of a gracious West,
You’ll greet each rising sun
loving New England best

—Charlotte Noyes (1948)

Counter-Attractions

Our little house is full of noise
But I would have it so;
If it were emptied of our boys
These small poems might not grow.
Verse thrives upon a shout, a sigh,
The advent of a kitten—
Such interruptions! This is why
Ma doesn’t get more written!

Our tiny yard is full of bloom—
Most fortunately so;
Were we bereft of its perfume
These verses might not grow.
For little poems, they grow on trees,
Love roses, showers, and sun—
Such interruptions! ‘Cause of these
Ma’s dishes don’t get done.

—Charlotte Noyes (1951)

History Tidbits

*From the Dedham
Historical Society & Museum*

**This week: In honor of
National Poetry Month, a collection
of poetry from a Dedham author**

*Contributed to
The Dedham Times*

The Dedham Historical Society & Museum (DHSM) received a donation of family photographs and poems written from the 1940s through the 1980s by Dedham resident Charlotte Parsons Noyes (1906–2000), a medical assistant and amateur poet.

There were not just one or two poems, but volumes of poems that spanned decades.

Her subjects mostly included her beloved town of Dedham and New England, her home and family, nature, and the seasons.

Charlotte was a regular poetry contributor to the *Dedham Transcript*, but she cast her net beyond Dedham, also publishing in the *Boston Herald*, *Boston Globe*, and *Patriot Ledger*, among others.

In addition to writing poetry, she wrote messages in the 1940s for Rustcraft greeting cards. From 1950–63, she created a newsletter, “A Small Selection,” that included poems she and others authored; she also hosted a local poetry appreciation club.

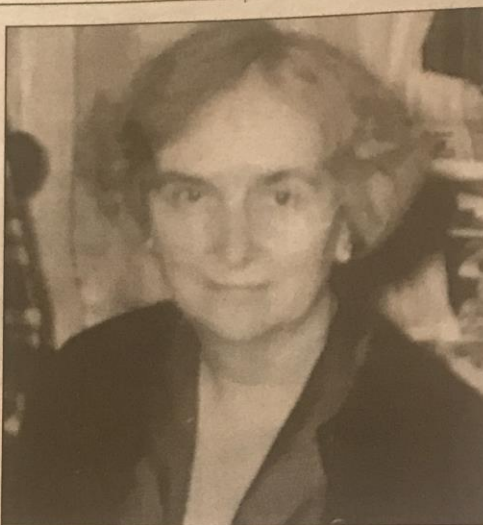
Charlotte also dabbled in photography, receiving honorable mention at a Festival of the Arts presented by the Dedham Art Guild in 1978.

In 1965, Charlotte submitted for consideration the lyrics for the yet undetermined Massachusetts State Song. Her “Massachusetts! Behold Her!” was set to a musical score composed by Bessie Althin Toombs (the original score and lyrics are part of the donation). Alas, in 1966, “All Hail to Massachusetts” by Arthur James Marsh was adopted as the official state song.

The following poem, “Appointment with April,” was selected from Charlotte’s “Suburban Souvenir” album because of its timeliness to the season.

The daffodils of Dedham
were shining in the rain;
Against the shadowed hillsides
we saw their beauty plain
For every golden daffy
the sun had warmly kissed,
and every lovely garden
was lovelier in the mist.

The Dedham Historical Society & Museum thanks Linnea Bardarson for donating the material on behalf of Charlotte’s son, Hilary.



**(Above): Charlotte Parsons Noyes,
circa 1970s.**

Photo courtesy of the Dedham Historical Society & Museum

Counter-Attractions

Our little house is full of noise
But I would have it so;
If it were emptied of our boys
These small poems might not grow.
Verse thrives upon a shout, a sigh,
The advent of a kitten—
Such interruptions! This is why
Ma doesn’t get more written!
Our tiny yard is full of bloom—
Most fortunately so;
Were we bereft of its perfume
These verses might not grow.
For little poems, they grow on trees,
Love roses, showers, and sun—
Such interruptions! ‘Cause of these
Ma’s dishes don’t get done.

—Charlotte Noyes (1951)

Depend On It

New England gives a man
a handshake thin,
Chooses her words most sparingly
before she takes him in—
Yet you may wager life itself
upon an utterance brief,
And that cool handclasp can grow
strong beyond belief!
Despite the swift embraces
of a gracious West,
You’ll greet each rising sun
loving New England best

—Charlotte Noyes (1948)