Maud’s Will

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About Maud’s Will

For Canada 150, the Lucy Maud Montgomery Society of Ontario commissioned me to write one of my “song portraits” to honour L.M. Montgomery for their “Spirit of Canada" Conference. In response, I created a song cycle including this spoken word poem. I wrote “Maud’s Will” because I couldn’t help it. To me, Maud has so many personal dimensions and voices that my one piece, “L.M. Montgomery: A Song Portrait” was not nearly enough to express my connection to her.

The point of perspective of this poem is taken from the end of Maud’s life. It is a first-person keening of her life’s story. It was inspired by the breathtaking work of Elizabeth Hillman Waterston and Mary Henley Rubio on Maud’s rightful resurgence as a literary giant, her journals, and her body of work. As I dug further, I began to realize something of the scope, depth, and dedication of Canadian and international scholars. I am humbled by their work, the continuing work, and the inspiration for other scholars to step up.

This piece is akin to a last will and testament. It is a baton-passing of her written self to those of us who truly embrace and study Lucy Maud Montgomery Macdonald. It is a challenge to her scholars, artists, and fans. This is a spoken word poem; it accelerates and rests, is hard and soft; it remembers Maud, the person; it honours her humanity and creative genius.

Scholars will recognize her voice through mine. Most every line has a reference. There are double entendres. There are references to handwork and baking, contentment, marriage, children, duty, discontentment, physical and mental illness, and survival. I was conscious of being kind but also as candid as I could be. I wanted to include and honour Maud and the scholarship that continues to enrich our lives, guiding us to see beyond Maud’s veil.

I would also like to recognize Maud’s family’s ongoing dedication, openness, and generosity. Those I have met and with whom I have corresponded have been so very kind. Thank you. And so, I hope you will agree that this poem honours L.M. Montgomery/Mrs. Ewen/Ewan Macdonald.

Maud’s Will1

I, Lucy Maud Montgomery,
Bequeath my life to you
To do as you will
Parsing pieces placed on pages2
Through my ages

Soft or shrill
Truth or fancy[3]
From this fitful farce[4] of life
As author, mother, and as clergy's wife[5]

I'm harnessed to my pride[6]
Its pedigree of clans[7]
Wedding bands of convention
He was educated, handsome
We were fond of one another
But unwise[8]

And Mother cries:
My babies born—and dead![9]
My pride and joy—and dread!
My father's daughter fights against the tide
Rising through imagination, I survive![10]

I sew my threads of living
Dainty stitches, fervent knitting
Fancy work[11]
Ever mending in the ends
I pretend

But it's mine
My life of contradictions
Of illogical convictions
The refrain of Lover's Lane[12]
Bestowing benedictions,
Toed the line

And in time
Perhaps those who read it
Like a recipe,[13]
Will knead it
?Til I rise—before their eyes

Is it you?[14]
Will you dare to pull my inky thread of Truth
From all my works
Behind closed doors[15] of Fame
Where I raged ashamed
Of a name
Of the one I chose to marry[16]
To submit to, to carry
But although I'm dead and buried
I claim
My fame and pride

Regardless of whom I lie beside

He preached his truth[17]
But he never dared
Or even cared to read me

I gave him sons[18]
Though one died[19]
And a home where he could thrive
Or hide—terrified[20]
Like Noah's sons, I covered him[21]
I nursed my husband far from prying eyes[22]
No one was wise[23]
?Til I felt
The crazy quilt[24]
Metastasize[25]

I did my best!
As for the rest, no one knew …
Until you[26]

But remember that I lived contentment[27] too
That I loved my dear wee babies[28]
Loved to cook and sew and knew jolly times[29]
With Chester, Stuart, Ewan[30]
With Frede and merry cousins[31]
And in my daily garden[32]
Tend the Race of Joseph[33] who
Rarely grew in my diaries[34]
For my tidal waves of worry
Under-towed that happy light
And drew me to the tempest of the night

Well, there you are[35]
And does it truly matter
That you know my secret torture[36] or
Run blithely o'er the orchards[37] of my mind
Until you find
Your own flash[38] of freedom
And catching up behind
Unwind
And rest
Right
In my story books[39]
And poem[40] nooks
Like castles in the pines[41]
Across the lines
Of time and tongue[42]
You have begun

To be my friend
Around the bend[43]
?Til story's end

I, Lucy Maud Montgomery
And Macdonald—Ewen's wife[44]
Bequeath my life to you
To do as you will
With its pieces placed on pages
Through my ages
Soft or shrill
Truth or fancy

If you can see
(Placed and edited precisely
In my stories and my diaries)[45]
Between the lines,
Do tell!

But whatever you discover
Rest assured, dear believer
After life's fitful fever
I sleep well![46]

Acknowledgements: Thank you to the Lucy Maud Montgomery Society of Ontario for commissioning this work; to the Helen Creighton Folklore Society for two research grants toward my ongoing work; and to the L.M. Montgomery Institute and *The Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies* for encouraging my work. Thanks to the University of Guelph Archives Special Collections for LMM photos and portraits, Mary Beth Cavert (Ewen/Ewan photos), and George Campbell (LMM photo); see below photo credits. Thanks to Tom Leighton for creating and performing his beautiful piano voicing of my "L.M. Montgomery: A Song Portrait."

Banner image: Montgomery writing. Peppard Lockyer writes, "the original photo was given with permission by George Campbell from the Anne of Green Gables Museum, Park Corner, PEI. From Maud's journal, I learned this maternity dress was actually pink and cream coloured, so I edited it and colourized it and used this, my edited version in my 2022 book, *My Maud by Katie Maurice*."

Bio: Rosalee Peppard Lockyer is a women's oral historian, writer, and musical artist. For over twenty-five years she has created, published, and internationally toured her "song portraits" and musical presentations of the women she interviews and researches. She is the *Heritage Ambassador* of the Helen Creighton Folklore Society https://www.helencreighton.org, and her commissioned work of the past eight years featuring L.M. Montgomery has been published as a song cycle, a spoken word poem in the *Continuing Conversations 2022 edition: Children and Childhoods in L.M. Montgomery*, as well as a storybook *My Maud by Katie Maurice*; and as choral

sheet music by Rosalee with Tom Leighton: *L.M. Montgomery, a song portrait*, (selections played during this video's intro and outro), published by the *Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies* (https://journaloflmmontgomerystudies.ca/Writers-and-Artists/Peppard-Lockyer/LMMontgomery-Song-Portrait). http://www.rosaleepeppardlockyer.bandcamp.com/).

- 1 The title, "Maud's Will," is a double entendre: her last will and testament and her fierce determination.
- 2 Recognizing L.M. Montgomery scholars and their dedication to sleuth out her truths in the raw notes, journals, scrapbooks, essays, photographs, poems, stories, and novels Maud left as clues.
- 3 "Fancy" is another term for imagination in this context.
- 4 In a letter, Maud mentioned biography was typically a single perspective of a life and therefore a "farce" because we are made up of several selves (Rubio, *Lucy Maud* 1).
- 5 L.M. Montgomery became a literary celebrity after the publication of *Anne of Green Gables* in 1908. She married a Presbyterian minister, Rev. Ewen Macdonald (she spelled Ewan) in 1911, and they had three sons, Chester C. (1912), Hugh (1914 stillborn), and E. Stuart (1915).
- 6 Maud mentions the "pride" of the Macneill family in her autobiography and quoted her Great-Aunt Mary Lawson: "From the conceit of the Simpsons, the pride of the Macneills, and the vain-glory of the Clarks, good Lord deliver us" (*AP* 16). Maud also echoed this in *Anne's House of Dreams*.
- 7 Maritime clan history and status were important factors in Maud's heritage (Rubio 20).
- 8 Maud married Reverend Ewen Macdonald, from Bellevue, PEI. He was kind, educated, and good-looking. Maud was thirty-six years old and lonely. On the surface it was a "good match," but, in many ways, it was not (Rubio 114).
- 9 Their children: Chester Cameron, Little Hugh (stillborn), and Ewan Stuart. Maud grew to dread Chester's actions.
- 10 Maud had a deep affection for her father, Hugh Montgomery. The outgoing, more positive side of her personality, she attributed to him.
- 11 "Fancy work" is a term used for hand crafts such as knitting, crocheting, embroidery, etc. Maud had "busy hands" and was known as a proficient and superb craftswoman. She would often take "fancy work" with her on visits (Rubio 171).
- 12 "Lover's Lane" was Maud's heaven on earth. It was a place that restored her soul. It was a pathway she named and is found at the site of Green Gables Heritage Place, PEI. She immortalized it in *AGG*.
- 13 Maud was also a great cook. This is a reference to that as well as to the cookbooks that came from her recipes: *Aunt Maud's Recipe Book* (Crawfords), and *The Anne of Green Gables Cookbook* (Macdonald-Butler).
- 14 "You" refers to L.M. Montgomery scholars, devotees and fans who keep researching Maud's life and work for her truth.
- 15 In the mornings when Maud wrote her fiction, she would close the door to the parlour in Leaskdale, so as not to be disturbed. At home, she also had her privacy away from fans.
- 16 While Ewan was not the only person Maud wrote about with despair (despair for Chester's behaviour later overtook it by far), he was the first and consistent one, due to his ongoing and escalating mental illness.
- 17 Ewan was a Presbyterian minister who preached that doctrine and personally believed in his own "unpardonable sin" (Rubio 213).
- 18 See note 9.
- 19 See note 9.
- 20 Symptomatic of Ewan's mental illness.
- 21 When Noah was in a drunken sleep, naked, two of his sons acted quickly and "covered" or protected him from onlookers (Genesis 9:23). Maud was continually covering Ewan as his mental illness progressed.

Also, from Abigail Chandler's essay *A Dependent Status*: "England used a system known as coverture (this term comes from an archaic French word which means to cover) to determine women's legal status. Prior to marriage, a woman's legal identity was covered (not legally distinct from) by her father's legal identity. After marriage, a woman's legal identity was covered by her husband's legal identity. Married women were legally classified as a *feme covert*, or covered woman."

- 22 Maud was continually "covering" Ewan as his mental illness progressed.
- 23 Maud was adept at "covering" or protecting Ewan, keeping his parishioners at bay.
- 24 This "crazy quilt" metaphor is another example of Maud's own "parsing pieces" of her life. An alternative definition of "crazy" evokes damning and outdated language to define mental illness. To clarify, "crazy quilt" is the name of an old style of piecework quilt for which there is no uniform pattern or fabric. While connoting "wild" patterning, historically the moniker is derived from "crazing" or a cracked, geometric appearance, as found today in aged porcelain, or in this definition, certain styles of Japanese crackle glazing, such as raku. In Victorian times, the most popular exhibit of the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876 was the Japanese exhibition, featuring exotic asymmetrical art and colourful crackle-glazed pottery. This caused a sensation in North America and subsequently inspired the fabric arts, wherein quilting, the crazy quilt. Typically, it was a showcase of precious, finer fabric remnants, often from historically significant family garments such as wedding gowns or silk ties. The remnants were of different fabrics, colours, shapes, and sizes, creatively and painstakingly pieced together and top-stitched with fancy embroidery stitching. This time-consuming style of piecework quilting offered the creator the greatest "scope for imagination." Maud made crazy quilts; one is on display at the Anne of Green Gables Museum, PEI. Featured in this video is one of Maud's crazy-quilt samplers, as well as a full-size crazy quilt made with remnants of Maud's own dresses. When Maud lived in Leaskdale, her dressmaker, Jessie Bell, saved remnants of Maud's dresses and gave them to her niece, Alma Perrin Farrow, in the 1920s. Alma created this quilt displayed by her great-great-granddaughter Heather Rutherford, including history notes, at the *Orono Fair*, in Ontario in 2017. On a personal note, when I was growing up, my own mother, Greta, shared her grandmother's crazy quilt with me.
- 25 Both Ewan and Maud suffered with mental illness such as depression, and late in life it was exacerbated by unmonitored drug administration (Rubio 567).
- 26 Those of us who have benefited from and have begun our own work in the wake of the tireless, lifelong dedication of Dr. Elizabeth Waterston and Dr. Mary Rubio and their publications, including *The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery*, vols. I–V, and the *Complete Journals*, vols. I–II, with vols. III–VII carried on by Jen Rubio.
- 27 Maud spoke of her being content in her marriage and happy in her motherhood (*CJ* 3:275).
- 28 Maud's happiest times were among those as a new mother (*CJ* 3:72).
- 29 Maud enjoyed cooking and sewing.
- 30 Early in her marriage, Maud enjoyed her children and husband; later in life especially reminiscing about Leaskdale Christmases.
- 31 The John and Annie Campbell children of Park Corner, PEI, were Maud's "merry cousins"; of them, Frederica, "Frede," became her best friend.
- 32 Maud was a lifelong avid gardener. She loved flowers and constantly included them in her writing.
- 33 Frede's terminology for kindred spirits was "the race that knows Joseph." In Genesis 39, Joseph, the man of dreams, was wrongly treated by his brothers and sold into slavery. However, by the grace of God, he was recognized or known, embraced and promoted by his new master, later the prison warden, then the Pharaoh. In *AHD*, this phrase of Frede's is used often.
- 34 Maud consistently wrote out her "grumbles" in her diaries rather than the happy times.
- 35 This echoes the phrase Maud wrote, "Well, there you are" (*CJ* 7:21); and continues by referring to her life torments of health, lawsuits, reaction to the wars, struggles with duties, Ewan, and Chester.
- 36 Maud consistently wrote out her "grumbles" in her journals.

- 37 Both her Macneill grandparents' farm and her Campbell cousins' farm had orchards, creating much of the landscape of her dream life.
- 38 The "flash" was a point of intense imagination Maud experienced and fictionalized as Emily's experience.
- 39 Twenty of Maud's novels were published during her lifetime.
- 40 Maud was a poet at heart. She wrote approximately five hundred poems. Most were published during her lifetime, including her collection, *The Watchman and Other Poems* (1916).
- 41 Maud often wrote about her flights of fancy as building her "castles in Spain." She also loved pine trees. Both are deftly featured in *The Blue Castle*, her only novel set entirely in Ontario. Many thanks to Linda Jackson-Hutton and Jack Hutton for their kindness, generosity, and L.M. Montgomery expertise at Bala's Museum.
- 42 Maud's stories have survived and thrived to the present. Her works continue to be translated into new languages, including Gaelic.
- 43 "The bend in the road" is an image that was introduced in *AGG* Ch. 38 and is an important symbol throughout Maud's writing, photographs, and life. (Epperly, *Through Lover's Lane* 28).
- 44 Maud's husband's birth spelling of his name was Ewen McDonald. It is engraved on his headstone as Ewan (Maud's lifelong spelling), as well as Ewen. See Mary Beth Cavert's *Ew*n M*Donald: Ewen with an E, Macdonald with an A. The Shining Scroll*, 2023, 2–12.
- 45 Maud would do countless revisions. She was just as talented an editor of all her works, including her diaries or journals, as she was a writer.
- 46 In the epilogue of *Lucy Maud Montgomery: The Gift of Wings*, Dr. Mary H. Rubio writes: "Maud had asked in her journals that her tombstone be inscribed with a line she had adapted from Shakespeare: After life's fitful fever, she sleeps well" (584). I have chosen to honour Maud's wishes here by closing this tribute with those words, echoing the first stanza, again adapted in first person.

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Intro with musical accompaniment:

1. 00:00 *LMM writing in Leaskdale*. 1914, George Campbell, Anne of Green Gables Museum, Park Corner, PEI.

2. 00:10 *LMM age 17 portrait*, PW College. 1891, L.M. Montgomery Collection, Archival and Special Collections, University of Guelph Library, Guelph, ON.

3. 00:14 *LMM age 45 portrait*. 1919, L.M. Montgomery Collection, Archival and Special Collections, University of Guelph Library, Guelph, ON.

4. 00:18 *LMM age 61 portrait*. 1935, L.M. Montgomery Collection, Archival and Special Collections, University of Guelph Library, Guelph, ON.

5. 00:21 *LMM in front of Journey's End Toronto*. 1940, L.M. Montgomery Collection, Archival and Special Collections, University of Guelph Library, Guelph, ON.

Spoken Word:

6. 00:43 "… placed on pages …" *LMM Journal Volume 2 page 461*. 1908, L.M. Montgomery Collection, Archival and Special Collections, University of Guelph Library, Guelph, ON.

7. 1:07 "… He was educated, handsome …" *Rev. E. Macdonald portrait*. 1910, L.M. Montgomery Collection, Archival and Special Collections, University of Guelph Library, Guelph, ON, and Mary Beth Cavert.

8. 1:36 "… I sew my threads of living …" *LMM's Crazy Quilt Square 001 Front*. L.M. Montgomery Collection, Archival and Special Collections, University of Guelph Library, Guelph, ON.

9. 1:40 "… fervent knitting …" Peppard Lockyer, Rosalee. *Maud's apple leaf pattern cotton warp quilt*, begun 1914, UPEI Archives, Robertson Library, Charlottetown, PEI.

10. 1:57 "… The Refrain of Lover's Lane bestowing benedictions …" Montgomery, L.M. *Lover's Lane*. 1890s, L.M. Montgomery Collection, Archival and Special Collections, University of Guelph Library, Guelph, ON.

11. 2:22 "… Behind Closed doors of fame …" Montgomery, L.M. *Trees and flowers, Leaskdale Manse*. 1915, L.M. Montgomery Collection, Archival and Special Collections, University of Guelph Library, Guelph, ON.

12. 2:27 "… where I raged …" Montgomery, L.M. *The Manse, Norval*. 1926, L.M. Montgomery Collection, Archival and Special Collections, University of Guelph Library, Guelph, ON.

13. 2:49 "… He preached his truth …" *Rev. Ewan Macdonald*, portrait. L.M. Montgomery Collection, Archival and Special Collections, University of Guelph Library, Guelph, ON.

14. 3:01 "… and a home where he could thrive …" Peppard Lockyer, Rosalee. *Journey's End*. 2018, Toronto, ON.

15. 3:15 "… 'til I felt the crazy quilt metastasize …" Peppard Lockyer, Rosalee. *1920's heritage "Crazy Quilt" by Alma Perrin Farrow*. 2017, Orono, ON. (Featuring velvet remnants of dresses made for Maud in Leaskdale by Alma's Aunt Jessie Bell. On display at the heritage Orono Fair, Ontario. See above note 24).

16. 3:39 "… that I loved my dear, wee babies …" Montgomery, *L.M. LMM with Stuart and Chester, portrait Leaskdale*. 1917, L.M. Montgomery Collection, Archival and Special Collections, University of Guelph Library, Guelph, ON.

17. 3:45 "… knew jolly times with Chester, Stuart, Ewan …" Montgomery, L.M. *Three Good Pals [Ewan, Stuart and Chester]*. 1917, L.M. Montgomery Collection, Archival and Special Collections, University of Guelph Library, Guelph, ON.

18. 3:49 "… with Frede and 'merry cousins'…" Montgomery, L.M. *A flashlight photo of our supper table—very weird of me, poor of Ewan and Baby, excellent of Frede*. 1912, L.M. Montgomery Collection, Archival and Special Collections, University of Guelph Library, Guelph, ON.

19. 3:53 "… and in my daily garden tend the *race of Joseph* …" Montgomery, L.M. *Meself in me own garden, Norval*. 1926, L.M. Montgomery Collection, Archival and Special Collections, University of Guelph Library, Guelph, ON.

20. 4:17 "… or run blithely o'er the orchards of my mind …" Montgomery, L.M. *The orchard at Park Corner*. 1892, L.M. Montgomery Collection, Archival and Special Collections, University of Guelph Library, Guelph, ON.

21. 4:32 "… right, in my storybooks …" *Emily of New Moon, 001*. 1923, L.M. Montgomery Collection, Archival and Special Collections, University of Guelph Library, Guelph, ON

22. 4:35 "… like castles in the pines …" *Blue Castle, 001*. 1926, L.M. Montgomery Collection, Archival and Special Collections, University of Guelph Library, Guelph, ON.

23. 4:40 "… across the lines of time and tongue …" Moffatt, Etta. *Anna Ruadh*. 2019, First edition cover of *Anna Ruadh*, Gaelic translation of AGG, by Mòrag Anna NicNèill, Bradan Press, Halifax, NS.

24. 5:19 "… placed and edited precisely in my stories …" *Pat of Silver Bush, 001, Jacket*. 1933, L.M. Montgomery Collection, Archival and Special Collections, University of Guelph Library, Guelph, ON.

25. 5:21 "… and my diaries …" Carleton, Lara. *LMM Journal fan 1*. 2021, L.M. Montgomery Collection, Archival and Special Collections, University of Guelph Library, Guelph, ON.

Outro with musical accompaniment.

26. 5:43 Hammond, Melvin Ormond. *Portrait of LMM*. 1932, Archives of Ontario, with assistance from Melanie Whitfield and Earle Lockerby, Lucy Maud Montgomery Society of Ontario, Leaskdale, ON.

27. 5:48 *Anne van het eiland, Cat signature*. L.M. Montgomery Collection, Archival and Special Collections, University of Guelph Library, Guelph, ON.

28. 5:50 Montgomery, *L.M. Himself + meself*. 1930, L.M. Montgomery Collection, Archival and Special Collections, University of Guelph Library, Guelph, ON

29. 7:03 Matte-Kaci, Leila. *Rosalee with Maud and Lucky*. 2022. Cavendish, PEI.

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