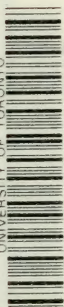


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From an Outpost

and Other Poems



LESLIE COULSON

Soldier and Journalist
London Battalion Royal Fusiliers

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from
May 1861.

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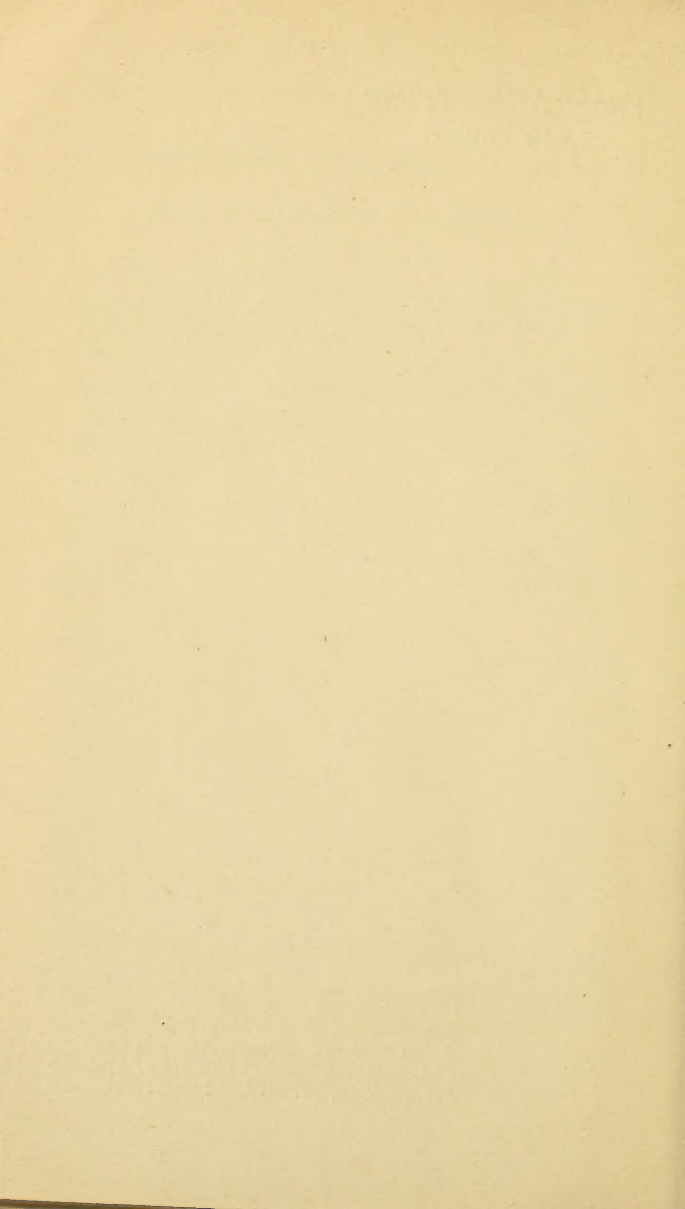
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FROM AN OUTPOST

Leslie Coulson

Introduction by F.R.C., 5. Who Made the Law? 9. From an Outpost, 11. Judgment, 12. "—But a Short Time to Live," 13. War, 14. The Last One, 15. The Call of the Sea, 17. A Soldier in Hospital, 20. The God Who Waits, 21. The City, 24. For City Folk, 25. Over the Hill, 27. Night, 29. The Ebb, 30. The Weeping Folk, 31. In Abbas Now, 33. Beauty, 34. The Star, 35. The Rainbow, 38. The World of One, 40. Premonition, 41. When I Come Home, 42.



From an Outpost

and Other Poems

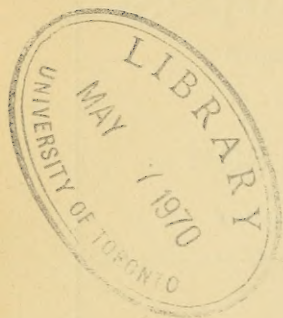
By
LESLIE COULSON

Soldier and Journalist
(London Battalion Royal Fusiliers)



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MALORY HOUSE, FEATHERSTONE
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Sergeant Leslie Coulson

THAT love of England which thrills through most of the poems he wrote was ever a living passion in the heart of Leslie Coulson. And for England and all that England means, he gave his life—a willing sacrifice.

A journalist, rapidly rising to distinction, his lot lay chiefly in Fleet Street. But he loved the open air and the countryside, and he invariably spent his week-ends and holidays in long walks over the hills and dales, and along the highways and byeways of rural England. Sensitive, imaginative, responsive to beauty in all its forms, he found inspiration and delight in the beauties of English scenery. He tramped most of the southern and western counties from end to end, and to him the villages of Sussex, Surrey, Dorset and Devon gave ceaseless impulse for joyous pilgrimage.

In a letter from a devastated village in France, he wrote in July, 1916: "I have seen men shattered, dying, dead—all the sad tragedy of war. And this murder of old stone, and lichened thatches, this shattering of little old churches and homesteads brings the tragedy home to me more acutely. I think to find an

English village like this would almost break my heart."

It was to aid in preserving the England he loved from such tragedy that Leslie Coulson was one of the first to spring to her defence. In September, 1914, he enlisted as a private in the 2/2nd London Regiment, Royal Fusiliers. He was counselled to enter an Officers' Training Corps and obtain a commission. "No," he said, "I will do the thing fairly. I will take my place in the ranks." High-minded, conscientious, self-critical, it seemed to him that this was his plain path of duty—to serve as a simple private soldier. He left England with his Battalion in December, 1914. And none of those to whom he was dear ever saw him again.

He served in Malta and in Egypt, and he went through the Inferno of Gallipoli, where he was slightly wounded. He was one of the last to leave the Peninsula. Never physically robust, he had experienced much ill-health before he became a soldier. And his endurance astonished all who knew him. But after recovery in Egypt from fever—the result of Gallipoli—he rose once again to endure.

In April, 1916, he went with his battalion to France. There the old regiment was disbanded, and he with some of his comrades in arms who had sailed out together on Christmas Eve, 1914, was attached to the 12th London Regiment—the Rangers.

He was now Sergeant, and was recommended for a commission. With his new Regiment, he took part in the Somme advance on July 1st. And from that time he was almost continuously in the trenches till October 7th, when, in the fore front of a charge against a German position near Lesbœufs, he was shot in the chest, and died a few hours later ; as he would have wished to die—with his breast to the foe. His age was 27.

He was not by nature a fighter. He was gentle, affectionate, and like all sympathetic natures, shrank from inflicting pain. In every tribute of the many paid to him in the Press, his lovable personality has been specially dwelt on. He declared that he could never “see red.” But he was endowed with the quiet courage and determination that invariably accompany the finer spirit. His Colonel testified of him that he was “A gallant hero ; one of the best men we ever had, loved and honoured by all.”

And Major Corbett Smith, who knew him well long before the war, declared that “It was just his lion-hearted courage and pride of race that carried him through ; a sweet and gallant English gentleman who died that the England he loved so well might live.”

Much of the noblest youth and promise of England has gone out untimely into the dark. Against every hallowed name on the Roll of

Honour may be sadly written "What might have been!" Leslie Coulson's work had only just begun. He had more than ordinary gifts; a poetic nature combined with luminous sanity and a fine intellect. He would certainly have achieved literary distinction. As it is, apart from his admirable journalistic work, "buried in the files," he has left a few brilliant short stories, a few uncompleted plays, and this slender sheaf of verse. That is all. It is to be regretted that he did not oftener exercise his poetic faculty. But as the *Manchester Guardian* wrote of him when news came of his death, "His life was his noblest poem to all who knew and loved him."

"If I should fall," he said in one of his last letters, "do not grieve for me. I shall be one with the wind and the sun and the flowers." He will also be one in the great host of our young dead whose glory is imperishable—the young who will never grow old.

Of the poems here collected, "——But a Short Time to Live" appeared in the *Poetry Review*, "The Weeping Folk" and "The Ebb" in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, "The Last One" in the *Westminster Gazette*, "The Rainbow" and "When I Come Home" in the *Sunday Chronicle*. "From an Outpost," "A Soldier in Hospital" and "In Abbas Now" were contributed to *The Garrison Goat*, a regimental paper published in Malta.

F.R.C.

Who Made the Law?

Who made the Law that men should die in
meadows?

Who spake the word that blood should splash
in lanes?

Who gave it forth that gardens should be bone-
yards?

Who spread the hills with flesh, and blood,
and brains?

Who made the Law?

Who made the Law that Death should stalk
the village?

Who spake the word to kill among the sheaves,
Who gave it forth that death should lurk in
hedgerows,

Who flung the dead among the fallen leaves?

Who made the Law?

Those who return shall find that peace endures,
Find old things old, and know the things they
knew,

Walk in the garden, slumber by the fireside,
Share the peace of dawn, and dream amid the
dew—

Those who return.

Those who return shall till the ancient pastures,
Clean-hearted men shall guide the plough-horse
reins,

The Poems of Leslie Coulson

Some shall grow apples and flowers in the valleys,
Some shall go courting in summer down the
lanes—

THOSE WHO RETURN.

But who made the Law? the Trees shall
whisper to him:

“See, see the blood—the splashes on our
bark!”

Walking the meadows, he shall hear bones
crackle,

And fleshless mouths shall gibber in silent lanes
at dark.

Who made the Law?

Who made the Law? At noon upon the
hillside

His ears shall hear a moan, his cheeks shall
feel a breath,

And all along the valleys, past gardens, croft,
and homesteads,

HE who made the Law,

He who made the Law,

He who made the Law shall walk along with
Death.

WHO made the Law?

October, 1916.

(Returned by the War Office.)

*Found among the effects of the late Sergt. Coulson,
who died October 8th, 1916.*

From an Outpost

I've tramped South England up and down

Down Dorset way, down Devon way,

Through every little ancient town

Down Dorset way, down Devon way.

I mind the old stone churches there,

The taverns round the market square,

The cobbled streets, the garden flowers,

The sundials telling peaceful hours

Down Dorset way, down Devon way.

The Meadowlands are green and fair

Down Somerset and Sussex way.

The clover scent is in the air

Down Somerset and Sussex way.

I mind the deep-thatched homesteads there,

The noble downlands, clean and bare,

The sheepfolds and the cattle byres,

The blue wood-smoke from shepherd's fires

Down Dorset way, down Devon way.

Mayhap I shall not walk again

Down Dorset way, down Devon way.

Nor pick a posy in a lane

Down Somerset and Sussex way.

But though my bones, unshriven, rot

In some far distant alien spot,

What soul I have shall rest from care

To know that meadows still are fair

Down Dorset way, down Devon way.

Judgment

So be it, God, I take what Thou dost give,
And gladly give what Thou dost take away.
For me Thy choice is barren days and grey.
Unquestioning Thy ordered days I live,
I do not seek to sift in Reason's sieve—
Thou rangest far beyond our Reason's sway.
We are but poor, uncomprehending clay,
For Thou to mould as Thou dost well conceive.

But when my blanchéd days of sorrow end,
And this poor clay for funeral is drest,
Then shall my soul to Thy Gold Gate ascend,
Then shall my soul soar up and summon Thee
To tell me *why*. And as Thou answerest,
So shall I judge Thee, God, not Thou judge me.

“ — **But a Short Time to Live** ”

Our little hour—how swift it flies
When poppies flare and lilies smile ;
How soon the fleeting minute dies,
Leaving us but a little while
To dream our dream, to sing our song,
To pick the fruit, to pluck the flower ;
The Gods—They do not give us long—
One little hour.

Our little hour—how short it is
When Love with dew-eyed loveliness
Raises her lips for ours to kiss
And dies within our first caress.
Youth flickers out like wind-blown flame,
Sweets of to-day to-morrow sour,
For Time and Death relentless claim
Our little hour.

Our little hour—how short a time,
To wage our wars, to fan our hates,
To take our fill of armoured crime,
To troop our banners, storm the gates.
Blood on the sword, our eyes blood-red,
Blind in our puny reign of power,
Do we forget how soon is sped
Our little hour ?

Our little hour—how soon it dies ;
 How short a time to tell our beads,
To chant our feeble Litanies,
 To think sweet thoughts, to do good deeds.
The altar lights grow pale and dim,
 The bells hang silent in the tower—
So passes with the dying hymn
 Our little hour.

War

Where war has left its wake of whitened bone,
Soft stems of summer grass shall wave again,
And all the blood that war has ever strewn
 Is but a passing stain.

The Last One

I'm walkin' on the Old Road
South'ard from the sea ;
But the Old Road, the Old Road,
Is not the same to me.
The grass-grown way is grass no more,
But sharp flints an' cold,
An' the little folk an' old folk
They stare so strange an' bold.

I'm up along the Old Road
On cold flints an' grey ;
An' as I pass the Wealden folk
" A furriner," they say.
" A furriner from Kent, may be,
Maybe a Northern man."
An' purty folk an' plain folk,
They look at me askan'.

A-trailin' down the Old Road
A furriner I be !
Whose father an' *his* father, too,
Was Wealden-born like me ;
Whose mother an' her mother, too,
Was bred on Beacon Brow ;
But the valley-folk an' hill-folk
They do not know me now.

Sore-footed on the Old Road

I passed the archard wall,
But archard all is cut an' bare,
There be no trees at all.

The thatch that spread above my head
Is gapin' wide and old ;
An' my women-folk an' men-folk
Are lying in the mould.

Back along the Old Road,
Nor'ard to the sea.

The Old Road, the Old Road,
Is blood an' tears to me.

There's Death an' Ruin at my back,
The empty world before ;
An' furrin folk, not home folk,
Will screw my coffin door.

The Call of the Sea

(SIDI BISHR. EGYPT. *Feb. 18th, 1916.*)

All day long in the sun,
I heard the blue sea murmur
Softly, gently, sweetly,
As the murmured prayers of a nun ;
Her bosom rising and falling
Like the breast of a young maid sleeping,
Save where the fine gold sand lay firmer,
And the waves flew gaily, fleetly,
In a flutter of white foam leaping,
And calling—in joyousness calling
Through a mist of spray
As a child calls to a child in play.

All night long
I listened and heard the sea
Whispering, whispering lonely,
A sad, sweet, sorrowful song—
A wistful song,
That touched the heart of me.
Its cadence strange and holy
Like music that haunts the brain—
Half-joy, half-pain,

With a sorrowful sense of the rapture
Of magic nights of love,
Lost beyond all recapture.
Ah, me! as I heard the sea
Whispering through the night,
I heard once more
In the murmured music along the shore
A girl who sang to me,
Once on a wonderful night of moon,
In a world of silver light.
Ah, me! the sea's soft moon
Through the long, slow night!

To-day,
The sea drowned a man—
Caught him up in his play,
Swept him away,
Heard him cry, frightened, fighting for breath
As he sank,
Sported and played with him, tossed him in
 silver spray,
Beat him to death,
Threw him back on the sand
Ugly and swollen and dead,
With his hair matted and lank
On his battered head.

All night long I listen and hear the sea
Call with the voice of death,
And the wind from the sea
Is damp with the dampness of death,
And the tide creeps in to the shore
Muttering, muttering, sinister, stealthily dark—
Hark !
Muttering—whispering—whining—
Calling for more !

A Soldier in Hospital

(VALETTA).

Here, as I lie in this white cot,
The world seems as a dream remote—
The echo of a strident note,
Once heard, now half forgot.

In this dim room, sequestered, high,
Time does not beat with anvil ring;
The sand runs slow, untroubling
The hours as they go by.

I lie and watch the sunlit wall,
A little space of empty sky,
I watch the shadows creeping by,
Slowly, till evenfall.

And from the crooked street below,
In fits and starts melodious rise
The sounds of bells, and children's cries,
And traffic to and fro.

A caged thrush in his simple rhyme,
Flutes fitfully from hour to hour;
A faint chime from a city tower
Murmurs of fleeting time.

While *there* the vulture beats his wings,
The pulse of war throbs fever high,
Here for a little space I lie
And dream of little things.

The God Who Waits

The old men in the olden days,
Who thought and worked in simple ways,
Believed in God and sought His praise.

They looked to God in daily need,
He shone in simple, homely deed ;
They prayed to Him to raise their seed.

He sowed on mountain side and weald,
He steered the plough across the field,
He garnered in their harvest yield.

And if He gave them barren sod,
Or smote them with His lightning rod,
They yielded humbly to their God.

They searched the record of their days
To find and mend their evil ways
Which made the wrath of God to blaze.

And if no evil they could find,
They did not say, " Our God is blind,"
" God's will be done," they said, resigned.

So played the old their humble part,
And lived in peace of soul and heart,
Without pretence of Reason's art.

But we have lost their simple creed
Of simple aim and simple need,
Of simple thought and simple deed.

Their creed has crumbled as their dust,
We do not yield their God as just,
Now question holds the place of trust.

Faith blossomed like the Holy Rod,
So grew the old men's faith in God.
We cannot tread the path they trod.

We were not born to anchored creed
That measures good and evil deed—
A guide to those who guidance need.

The God the old men hearkened to
We left, and in our image drew
And fashioned out a God anew.

That iron God, who still unfed,
Sits throned with lips that dribble red
Among the sacrificial dead.

Belching their flames between the bars,
Our fires sweep out like scimitars
Across the Eden of the stars.

And souls are sold and souls are bought,
And souls in hellish tortures wrought
To feed the mighty Juggernaut.

The dripping wheels go roaring by
And crush and kill us where we lie
Blaspheming God with our last cry.

Man's cry to man the Heaven fills ;
We hear not in our marts and mills
The silent voices of the hills.

The message of the breathing clay,
Calling us through the night and day
To come away, to come away !

For though old creeds, had we the will,
We cannot, lacking faith, fulfil,
The God above all creed waits still.

For still beyond the city gate,
The fallow fields eternal wait
For us to drive our furrow straight.

The City

Out on the downs the wind blows fresh
The wind that blows from the sea,
But I am trapped in the city's mesh,
The wind blows not for me.

Out on the downs the Pilgrim's Way
Lies white in the southern sun.
But my feet are held to the pavement grey.
For there is work to be done.

Over the downs the white clouds sail
Like ships on a sapphire sea.
Over the city a black smoke veil—
The clouds are not for me.

Out on the downs the flower and tree,
The bee with his lazy hum,
The bird and the brook, they call to me,
They call, but I may not come.

Out on the downs the Pilgrims trod,
My heart would sing and be free,
But here in the city with Mammon god
There is no joy for me.

For City Folk

I like to leave the toilsome town
And go where roads wind up and down
That are not straight like Oxford Street,
Or noisy with a million feet.

For you may travel half a shire,
And only glimpse a distant spire,
Or maybe walk from dawn to dark
And only hear a soaring lark.

And there are flowers by the way,
And fields and farms and stacks of hay ;
Woods and lanes and little streams
That sing the songs you hear in dreams.

And where the hills fold softly down
You find a hamlet or a town
With little churches grey and old
Where country people's prayers are told.

The ancient houses dark and low
Were built by folk dead long ago,
Who clipped their trees with quaint designs ;
And there are inns with hanging signs.

The White Hart or the Pelican,
Fit resting place for any man ;
With paintings of old powdered heads,
And big four-poster feather beds.

And though they do not know your name,
Or where you go or whence you came,
The people have a friendly way,
They nod to you and cry " Good-day ! "

So when you find the city street,
Is hot and hollow to your feet,
And when you find the noise and stress
Invading your heart's quietness,

Then straightway you must turn and go
To where the roads wind high and low,
And find the peacefulness that fills,
The quiet foldings of the hills.

Over the Hill

Over the hill, over the hill,
I saw a man pass by ;
A soft brown tan was on his cheek
And a sparkle in his eye ;
A stout ash stick he bore in his hand,
He whistled with joyous trill,
Out of the shadows I watched him go
Over the hill.

Over the hill, over the hill,
The clouds float high and low,
Golden and white, and cold, cold grey,
A-sailing past they go.
They hang at anchor like carven ships
When the wind is calm or still,
But always they sail when the sun goes down
Over the hill.

Over the hill, over the hill,
The wind blows sweet to me—
Sweet with the scent of the new-turned earth
And the scent of the salt white sea.
It cries with the cry of a veering gull,
It whispers and whistles shrill,
But always it comes with a message for me
Over the hill.

Over the hill, over the hill,
I see the strangers go,
I watch them mount against the sky
And when the clouds drift low,
I watch them fade in the wet, grey mist,
And when the night is still,
I hear them stealing quietly past,
Over the hill.

Night

Down in the silent valley
The sombre shadows creep,
As day's last legions dally
Before the gates of Sleep.

The distant downland dwindles,
A late lark twitters low,
Out of the darkness kindles
A golden window's glow.

The stars keep, silver streaming,
The path since time-dawn trod ;
The whole world falls to dreaming
Beneath the eyes of God.

But valley streams are weeping,
The mist moves spectre-white
Around your window creeping.

* * * * *

God keep you safe to-night.

The Ebb

It is dark on the quay,
With only a white gull calling,
And a whisper at sea,
Where the long, slow tide is falling,
And the creak of a rope where a ship stirs in its
sleep,
And the sound of slow water where the outward
currents creep.

There is something of death
In the sound of this outward flowing—
A failing of breath
And we go as the waters are going,
The inward swirl, the joy of the high waves'
leap,
And then the turn of the tide, back to the deep.

The Weeping Folk

With lute in hand I went along the way,
To merry air I sang a merry lay.
And here and there, and round and round again,
And up and down I sang a blithe refrain—
 Tira-lira, leaves are still a-shimmer,
 Who will weep while leaves are still
 a-shimmer ?

I sat and sang beside the streamlet clear,
And all the little fish came up to hear.
And all the little birds from tree to tree—
The little birds flew down to sing with me.
 Tira-lira, water still runs silver,
 Who will weep while water still runs silver ?

And deep within the wood at Summer noon,
I set my strings to match the murmured croon
Of winds that swayed the branches in the sky,
And sang my song to their soft lullaby.
 Tira-lira, winds still whisper sweetly,
 Who will weep while winds still whisper
 sweetly ?

I stood beneath the casement of the night,
When all was still, and only stars were bright—

A troubadour to silent listeners there,
I gaily tinkled out a little air.

Tira-lira, stars are still a-glitter,
Who will weep while stars are still a-glitter ?

I followed where the white road led me to,
I saw the City gate. I capered through.
But lack-a-day, my merry strings were mute,
And, lack-a-day, I dropped my merry lute.

Miserere ! who would hear my ditties ?
These were weeping folk who lived in cities.

In Abbas Now

The apple bloom be on the bough
In Castle Abbas orchards now,
And larks be twitterin' away
'Bove Castle Abbas Church to-day.
An' there be trout and tricksome bream
A-sportin' down in Abbas stream.

Along the bench beside the "Plough,"
Be folks with jugs of zyder now,
An' Abbas zyder du be fine,
The very cream o' Devon wine ;
There's none knows better than I du,
I've drunk a pippikin or two.

'Tis market day in Totnes Town,
An' Abbas folks be joggin' down
In little carts with eggs and cream
Along the road by Abbas stream.
An' Abbas maids will all be there,
An' Abbas maids be sweet and fair.

Zure Abbas maids be fair to see ;
There's one of 'em be fond o' me.
It's many a day we've dandered down
By Abbas stream to Totnes Town.
And many a day we've tripped it there
All round and round at Totnes Fair.

But I be far from Abbas here,
All in the sap-time o' the year ;
And in the sap-time maidens' hearts
Du find new loves by fits and starts.
I wonder now, if my maid be,
Down Abbas way, still fond o' me !

Beauty

The seed of beauty is in all things sown,
There is no ugliness that will not bring
Its meed of beauty when the time has grown
Ripe for its harvesting.

Nothing uncomely that will ever stand,
That will not yield to beauty in the end ;
Nothing is shapen that the magic hand
Of beauty shall not mend.

Do we lose heart that ugly things abide,
That we are passing ere the change begin ?
Have we not eyes to see the endless tide
Of beauty sweeping in ?

The Star

Your image was not with me through the day,
I could not call your face before my eyes,
You seemed so far away—
So far away in thought, remote, apart,
And I exulted secretly to find
That I was free from your omnipotence.
And yet, though glad to think me free again,
Because I could not bring you to my mind
There lay from dawn to dawn upon my heart
The shadow of a loss—a troubled sense
Of dull grey emptiness—of something passed
Away, whose unmissed absence was a pain,
Like some old haunting memory that lies
Locked in a hidden chamber of the brain
Unknown, yet sadly leaving us aware
That something once was there,

Something, we know not what, we would have
 kept
Through all the troublous clamour of the day.
While thus your influence slept
I laboured and I cast my strength away
Fighting, with golden lures and gauds in view—
Things once renounced, held worthless, cast
 behind
But now renounced, now cast behind no more.

And then my secret exultation grew,
I could take back those things that I forswore,
Now that your image was not in my mind,
And as I laboured in the dusty glare,
So I rejoiced that I again was free,
But heavily upon my heart still lay
The shadow of something that had gone from
there.

The long day waned. I turned my tired eyes
Towards the glooming skies.

Low in the west like dew among the fires
I saw a star

Shining against the crimson of the fires,
Paler than lilies are.

And as I looked on that low, silver gleam
It seemed to me I looked into your eyes
Dimly and infinitely from afar.

My hair was stirred by breathings of cool wind,
And like a voice in a forgotten dream
Heard in the outer spaces of the mind,
I heard your voice, faint, whispering, at my ear.

Over the world's white edge the slow night crept,
While day went slowly down her azure stair.
Heaven and earth grown one in silence slept,
And clear among the countless stars that shone
That one pale star gleamed on.

In that high moment of tranquillity,
When this, God's world, in breathless slumber
 lay
And He walked in the Garden once again—
In that high moment strove my soul in pain,
Strove in a sudden ecstasy of fire
To fashion something golden from the clay,
To bring one lily to the field of night,
To chant one stave to match the high stars'
 choir.

And so it drew your image for me there,
Out of the silver glooms, the dreamy air.
Out of the far, white stars, the soundless skies
Your image grew again before my eyes
Wonderful, near.

Sudden the shadow lifted from my heart,
And that dull pain of absence passed away.
I thought I had escaped you through the day,
I thrust your image from me, fled from you.
“ She is not there ! ” I said, “ and I am free ! ”
But then God's beauty touched the best of me,
The worst fell from me, and I saw your face,
And in that moment knew
That all the best of me was yours by grace,
That I had lost my freedom—and was free !

The Rainbow

I watch the white dawn gleam,
 To the thunder of hidden guns.
I hear the hot shells scream
Through skies as sweet as a dream
 Where the silver dawnbreak runs.
And stabbing of light
Scorches the virginal white.
But I feel in my being the old, high, sanctified
 thrill,
And I thank the gods that the dawn is beautiful
 still.

From death that hurtles by
 I crouch in the trench day-long,
But up to a cloudless sky
From the ground where our dead men lie
 A brown lark soars in song.
Through the tortured air,
Rent by the shrapnel's flare,
Over the troubleless dead he carols his fill,
And I thank the gods that the birds are beautiful
 still.

Where the parapet is low
 And level with the eye
Poppies and cornflowers glow
And the corn sways to and fro
 In a pattern against the sky.

The gold stalks hide
Bodies of men who died

Charging at dawn through the dew to be killed
or to kill.

I thank the gods that the flowers are beautiful
still.

When night falls dark we creep
 In silence to our dead.
We dig a few feet deep
And leave them there to sleep—
 But blood at night is red,

Yea, even at night,

And a dead man's face is white.

And I dry my hands, that are also trained to
kill,

And I look at the stars—for the stars are beautiful
still.

FRANCE, *August 8th, 1916.*

The World of One

Life and I were alone together,
The world and I were one.
Earth and sea were mine to tether,
Mine was the golden sun.

Life ran clear as a limpid river,
The seas were charted seas ;
God was a kind and generous giver,
Giver of gifts to please.

I dreamed and slept in shadow and sun,
I lipped the goblet's brim ;
And I was one in a world of one,
That span to my will and whim.

Earth was granite beneath my heel,
Above me a smiling sky ;
And life was certain as tempered steel,
For me to profit thereby.

I climbed the edge of the sky-flung peak,
Brazened to earth and sun ;
King of all that I could seek,
Lord of the world of one.

But out of this has come a day
When I hear a bugle call ;
And forth I go from a world of one,
To serve for a world of all.

Premonition

As we kissed and clung in the passion
Of love's first passionate spell ;
There came a shadow between us—
A shadow fell.

So long we had loved and waited,
So weary a time to wait ;
Yet a shadow came between us—
A shadow of fate.

I felt your warm arms round me,
The leap and fall of your heart ;
But a shadow came between us
To draw us apart.

The blood in our lips was frozen,
I felt your warm arms fall ;
A shadow came between us—
The end of all.

When I Come Home

When I come home, dear folk o' mine,
We'll drink a cup of olden wine ;
And yet, however rich it be,
No wine will taste so good to me
As English air. How I shall thrill
To drink it in on Hampstead Hill
When I come home !

When I come home, and leave behind
Dark things I would not call to mind,
I'll taste good ale and home-made bread,
And see white sheets and pillows spread.
And there is one who'll softly creep
To kiss me ere I fall asleep,
And tuck me 'neath the counterpane,
And I shall be a boy again
When I come home !

When I come home, from dark to light,
And tread the roadways long and white,
And tramp the lanes I tramped of yore,
And see the village greens once more,
The tranquil farms, the meadows free,
The friendly trees that nod to me,
And hear the lark beneath the sun,
'Twill be good pay for what I've done,
When I come home !



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