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# A HIGHLAND REGIMENT



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# A HIGHLAND REGIMENT

BY E. A. MACKINTOSH, M.C.

LT. SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS

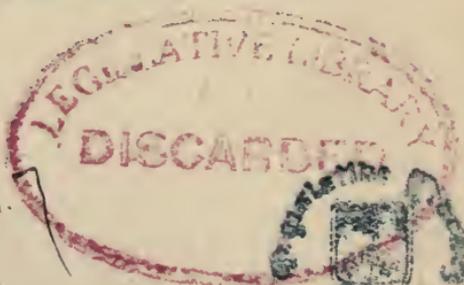


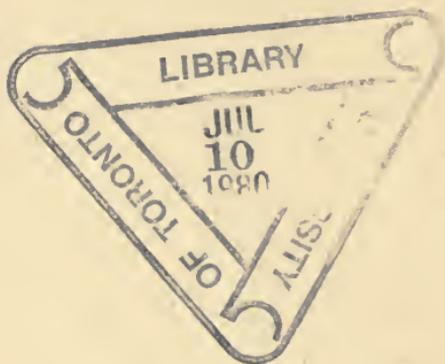
*Poetry*

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To  
THE OFFICERS AND MEN  
OF THE 5TH SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS  
AND ESPECIALLY TO  
MAJOR A. L. MACMILLAN  
WHO IS AND WILL BE  
TO ME AS TO ALL THE REST  
THE MAJOR FOR EVER



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I

A HIGHLAND REGIMENT



## TO A PRIVATE SOLDIER

**T**HE air is still, the light winds blow  
Too quietly to wake you now.  
Dreamer, you dream too well to know  
Whose hand set death upon your brow.  
The shrinking flesh the bullets tore  
Will never pulse with fear again ;  
Sleep on, remembering no more  
Your sudden agony of pain.

Oh, poor brave smiling face made naught,  
Turned back to dust from whence you came,  
You have forgot the men you fought,  
The wounds that burnt you like a flame ;  
With stiff hand crumbling a clod,  
And blind eyes staring at the sky,  
The awful evidence of God  
Against the men who made you die.

You have forgotten, sleeping well,  
But what of them ? shall they forget  
Your body broken with the shell,  
Your brow whereon their seal is set ?  
Does earth for them hold any place  
Where they shall never see the flies  
Clustered about your empty face  
And on your blind, accusing eyes ?

Good-night, good sleep to you. But they  
Will never know good-night again,  
Whose eyes are seeing night and day,  
The humble men who died in vain.  
Their ears are filled with bitter cries,  
Their nostrils with the powder smell,  
And shall see your mournful eyes  
Across the reeking fires of hell.

ANNS AN GLEANN'SAN  
ROBH MI OG

**I**N the Glen where I was young  
Blue-bell stems stood close together,  
In the evenings dew-drops hung  
Clear as glass above the heather.  
I'd be sitting on a stone,  
Legs above the water swung,  
I a laddie all alone,  
In the glen where I was young.

Well, the glen is empty now,  
And far am I from them that love me,  
Water to my knees below,  
Shrapnel in the clouds above me ;  
Watching till I sometimes see,  
Instead of death and fighting men,



The people that were kind to me,  
And summer in the little glen.

Hold me close until I die,  
Lift me up, it's better so ;  
If, before I go, I cry,  
It isn't I'm afraid to go ;  
Only sorry for the boy  
Sitting there with legs aswung  
In my little glen of joy,  
In the glen where I was young.

AUGUST, 1914

## FROM A WAR STATION

To A. K. F.

**I**N Oxford now the lamps are lit,  
The city bells ring low,  
And up and down the silent town  
The ghosts of friendship go.

With whispering laughs they meet and pass  
As we were used to do,  
And somewhere in the airy crowd  
My spirit walks with you.

The troopers quarter in the rooms  
That once were yours and mine,  
And you are lying out to-night  
Behind the firing-line.

But still in rooms that were our own  
We wander, you and I,  
And night and day our spirits walk  
Along the empty High.

GOLSPIE, 1915

## CHA TILL MACCRUIMEIN

### DEPARTURE OF THE 4TH CAMERONS

**T**HE pipes in the street were playing bravely,  
The marching lads went by,  
With merry hearts and voices singing  
My friends marched out to die ;  
But I was hearing a lonely pibroch  
Out of an older war,  
“ Farewell, farewell, farewell, MacCrimmon,  
MacCrimmon comes no more.”

And every lad in his heart was dreaming  
Of honour and wealth to come,  
And honour and noble pride were calling  
To the tune of the pipes and drum ;  
But I was hearing a woman singing  
On dark Dunvegan shore,  
“ In battle or peace, with wealth or honour,  
MacCrimmon comes no more.”

And there in front of the men were marching,  
With feet that made no mark,  
The grey old ghosts of the ancient fighters  
Come back again from the dark ;  
And in front of them all MacCrimmon piping  
A weary tune and sore,  
" On the gathering day, for ever and ever,  
MacCrimmon comes no more."

BEDFORD, 1915

## TO A DEAD SOLDIER

**S**O I shall never see you more.  
The northern winds will blow in vain  
Brave and heart-easing off the shore.  
You will not sail with them again.  
I shall not see you wait for me  
Where on the beach the dulse is brown,  
Nor hear at night across the sea  
Your chorus of the Nighean doun.

Are you so easy handled now  
That Flanders soil can keep you still  
Although the northern breezes blow  
All day across the fairy's hill?  
And can an alien lowland clay  
Hold fast your soul and body too,  
Or will you rise and come away  
To where our friendship waits for you?

You cannot rest so far from home,  
Your heart will miss the northern wind,  
Back from the lowland fields will come,  
Your soul the grave can never bind.  
Once more your hands will trim the sail  
That carries us across the bay  
To where the summer islands pale  
Over the seas and far away.

And you will sail and watch with me  
The things we saw and loved before,  
The happy islands of the sea,  
The breakers white against the shore.  
A hundred joys that we held dear  
Will call you from the Flanders town,  
And in the evenings I shall hear  
Your chorus of the Nighean doun.

BEDFORD, 1915

## THE WAITING WIFE

OUT on the hillside the wild birds crying,  
A little low wind and the white clouds flying,  
A little low wind from the southward blowing,  
What should I know of its coming and going ?

Over the battle the shrapnel crying  
A tune of lament for the dead and the dying,  
And a little low wind that is moaning and weeping  
For the mouths that are cold and the brave hearts sleeping.

I and my man were happy together  
In the summer days and the warm June weather—  
What is the end of our laughter and singing ?  
A little low wind from the southward winging.

The hearth is cold and my house is lonely,  
And nothing for me but waiting only,  
Feet round the house that come into it never,  
And a voice in the wind that is silent for ever.

GOLSPIE, 1915

## CHRIST IN FLANDERS

O H, you that took our sin and pain  
Upon your shoulders long ago,  
Are you come back to earth again,  
About the battle do you go ?  
By trenches where with bitter cries  
Men's spirits leave their tortured clay,  
Oh, wanderer with the mournful eyes,  
Are you on Flanders soil to-day ?

The battle fog is wreathed and curled  
Before us, that we cannot see  
The darkness of the newer world  
As your eternal agony,  
The gallant hearts, the bitter blood,  
The pains of them that have not died,  
A bright light in the eyes of God  
And a sharp spear-point in his side.

*Church Parade, 1915*

## HARVEST

**A** LONG the dusty highway,  
And through the little town,  
The people of the country  
Are riding up and down.  
Behind the lines of fighting  
They gather in all day  
The harvest, folk are reaping  
At home and far away.

If on the hills about us,  
Where now the thrush sings low,  
The face of earth were bitter,  
It would not hurt us so.  
Though earth grew strange and savage  
And all the world were new,  
It would not tear our memory  
The way the cornfields do.

Oh, you that fought your battles  
Beneath the Southern Cross,  
The earth was kinder to you,  
You could not feel your loss,  
Nor waken every morning  
And clear before you see  
The grassy fields and meadows  
Where you would wish to be.

But in a haunted corn-land  
We move, as in a dream  
Of quiet hills and hedges  
And a swift-flowing stream,  
And on the hills about us  
Through all the din of war,  
The home that we were born in,  
And we shall see no more.

BUIRE-SUR-ANCRE, 1915

## OXFORD FROM THE TRENCHES

**T**HE clouds are in the sky, and a light rain falling,  
And through the sodden trench splashed figures come  
and go,

But deep in my heart are the old years calling,  
And memory is on me of the things I used to know.

Memory is on me of the warm dim chambers,  
And the laughter of my friends in the huge high-ceilinged hall,  
Lectures and the voices of the dons deep-droning,  
The things that were so common once—O God, I feel them all.

Here there are the great things, life and death and danger,  
All I ever dreamed of in the days that used to be,  
Comrades and good-fellowship, the soul of an army,  
But, oh, it is the little things that take the heart of me.

For all we knew of old, for little things and lovely,  
We bow us to a greater life beyond our hope or fear,  
To bear its heavy burdens, endure its toils unheeding,  
Because of all the little things so distant and so dear.

BÉCOURT, 1915

## MISERERE

**G**ONE is now the boast of power,  
Strength to strike our foes again,  
God of battles in this hour  
Give us strength to suffer pain.  
Lest the spirit's chains be rent,  
Lest the coward flesh go free  
Unto thee our prayer is sent,  
Miserere Domine.

Death unseen beneath our feet,  
Death above us in the sky,  
Now before Thy judgment-seat  
Grant us honourably to die.  
Lustful, sinful, careless all,  
In the martyr's road are we.  
Lest from that high path we fall,  
Miserere Domine.



Men that mocked Thee to Thy face,  
Fools who took Thy name in vain—  
Grant that in this deadly place  
Jests and blasphemy remain.  
On the pallid face of death,  
Gasping slow and painfully  
Curses with its latest breath,  
Miserere Domine.

Where we see the men we know  
Rags of broken flesh and bone,  
And the thing that hurt them so  
Seems to wait for us alone,  
Where the silence of the grave  
Broods and threatens soundlessly,  
On the souls we cannot save,  
Miserere Domine.

LA BOISSELLE, 1915

## THE UNDYING RACE

**H**ERE in the narrow broken way  
Where silently we go,  
Steadfast above their valiant clay  
Forgotten crosses show.  
Our whispers call to many a ghost  
Across the flare-light pale,  
And from their graves the Breton host  
Stand up beside the Gael.

Year upon year of ancient sleep  
Have rusted on our swords,  
But once again our place we keep  
Against the Saxon hordes.  
Since Arthur ruled in Brittany,  
And all the world was new,  
The fires that burned our history,  
Burn in our spirits too.

One speech beyond their memory  
    Binds us together still,  
One dream of home wherein we see  
    River and sea and hill.  
When in the night-time Fingal's peers  
    Fight their old wars again,  
The blood of twice two thousand years  
    Leaps high in every vein.

Old songs that waked King Arthur's knights  
    Stir in our memory yet,  
Old tales of olden heroes fights  
    That we cannot forget,  
To die as Fingal's warriors died  
    The great men long ago,  
Breton and Gael stand side by side  
    Against the ancient foe.

LA BOISSELLE, 1915

## IN NO MAN'S LAND

**T**HE hedge on the left, and the trench on the right,  
And the whispering, rustling wood between,  
And who knows where in the wood to-night  
Death or capture may lurk unseen,  
The open field and the figures lying  
Under the shade of the apple trees—  
Is it the wind in the branches sighing,  
Or a German trying to stop a sneeze ?

Louder the voices of night come thronging,  
But over them all the sound is clear,  
Taking me back to the place of my longing  
And the cultured sneezes I used to hear,  
Lecture-time and my tutor's "handker"  
Stopping his period's rounded close,  
Like the frozen hand of the German ranker  
Down in a ditch with a cold in his nose.

I'm cold, too, and a stealthy snuffle  
From the man with a pistol covering me,  
And the Bosche moving off with a snap and a shuffle  
Break the windows of memory—  
I can't make sure till the moon gets lighter—  
Anyway shooting is over bold.  
Oh, damn you, get back to your trench, you blighter,  
I really can't shoot a man with a cold.

HAMMERHEAD WOOD

THIEPVAL, 1915

## SNOW IN FRANCE

**T**HE tattered grass of No Man's Land  
Is white with snow to-day,  
And up and down the deadly slopes  
The ghosts of childhood play.

The sentries, peering from the line,  
See in the tumbled snow  
Light forms that were their little selves  
A score of years ago.

We look and see the crumpled drifts  
Piled in a little glen,  
And you are back in Saxony  
And children once again.

From joyous hand to laughing face  
We watch the snow-balls fly,  
The way they used ere we were men  
Waiting our turn to die.

To-night across the empty slopes  
The shells will scream once more,  
And flares go up and bullets fly  
The way they did before ;

But for a little space of peace  
We watch them come and go,  
The children that were you and I  
At play among the snow.

BOIS D'AUTHUILLE, 1915

*τέτλαθι δὴ κραδίη*

**W**HERE the light wraith of death goes dancing  
In and out of the wavering line,  
Now retreating and now advancing  
Till opposite you he makes the sign,  
Though the wind of his breath be on you,  
Though in your flesh you feel the smart,  
There have been worse things laid upon you,  
Be steadfast and endure my heart.

There is no need of honour for you,  
There is no gift the gods can send,  
Only the weary days before you,  
Only endurance to the end.  
This remains that in all temptation  
Still your head shall be lifted high.  
You that have known a worse damnation,  
Why should you be afraid to die ?

You that are dead and damned already,  
How should you be afraid of death?  
Strength remains to you firm and steady  
Enduring still to your latest breath,  
Eyes to see and ears for hearing,  
Things and words you would fain forget,  
And anger to slay the snake of fearing  
That lives in the heart of the dead man yet.

Fear? If hope is a thing forgotten,  
What can you fear the gods will do?  
If the heart and kernel of life is rotten  
What is the husk to trouble you?  
Stand up straight to your work, be strong, lad,  
Never a fear of bullet or shell,  
You that have lived in hell for long, lad,  
Needn't be fearing to die in hell.

· THIEPVAL, 1915

## MATRI ALMAE

CITY of hopes and golden dreaming  
Set with a crown of tall grey towers,  
City of mist that round you streaming  
Screens the vision of vanished hours,  
All the wisdom of youth far-seeing,  
All the things that we meant to do,  
Dreams that will never be clothed in being,  
Mother, your sons have left with you.

Clad in beauty of dreams begotten  
Strange old city for ever young,  
Keep the visions that we've forgotten,  
Keep the songs we have never sung.  
So shall we hear your music calling,  
So from a land where songs are few  
When the shadows of life are falling,  
Mother, your sons come back to you.

So with the bullets above us flying,  
So in the midst of horror and pain  
We shall come back from the sorrow of dying  
To wander your magical ways again.  
For that you keep and grow not older  
All the beauty we ever knew,  
As the fingers of death grow colder,  
Mother, your sons come back to you.

*In the Leave Train, 1915*

## BEFORE THE SUMMER

WHEN our men are marching lightly up and down,  
When the pipes are playing through the little town,  
I see a thin line swaying through wind and mud and rain  
And the broken regiments come back to rest again.

Now the pipes are playing, now the drums are beat,  
Now the strong battalions are marching up the street,  
But the pipes will not be playing and the bayonets will not  
shine,

When the regiments I dream of come stumbling down the line.

Between the battered trenches their silent dead will lie  
Quiet with grave eyes staring at the summer sky.  
There is a mist upon them so that I cannot see  
The faces of my friends that walk the little town with me.

Lest we see a worse thing than it is to die,  
Live ourselves and see our friends cold beneath the sky,  
God grant we too be lying there in wind and mud and rain  
Before the broken regiments come stumbling back again.

CORBIE, 1916

## TO MY SISTER

**I**F I die to-morrow  
I shall go happily.  
With the flush of battle on my face  
I shall walk with an eager pace  
The road I cannot see.

My life burnt fiercely always,  
And fiercely will go out  
With glad wild fighting ringed around,  
But you will be above the ground  
And darkness all about.

You will not hear the shouting,  
You will not see the pride,  
Only with tortured memory  
Remember what I used to be,  
And dream of how I died.

You will see gloom and horror  
But never the joy of fight.  
You'll dream of me in pain and fear,  
And in your dreaming never hear  
My voice across the night.

My voice that sounds so gaily  
Will be too far away  
For you to see across your dream  
The charging and the bayonet's gleam,  
Or hear the words I say.

And parted by the warders  
That hold the gates of sleep,  
I shall be dead and happy  
And you will live and weep.

THE LABYRINTH, *May* 15, 1916

## IN MEMORIAM

PRIVATE D. SUTHERLAND KILLED IN ACTION IN THE  
GERMAN TRENCH, MAY 16, 1916, AND THE OTHERS  
WHO DIED.

SO you were David's father,  
And he was your only son,  
And the new-cut peats are rotting  
And the work is left undone,  
Because of an old man weeping,  
Just an old man in pain,  
For David, his son David,  
That will not come again.

Oh, the letters he wrote you,  
And I can see them still,  
Not a word of the fighting  
But just the sheep on the hill  
And how you should get the crops in  
Ere the year got stormier,

And the Bosches have got his body,  
And I was his officer.

You were only David's father,  
But I had fifty sons  
When we went up in the evening  
Under the arch of the guns,  
And we came back at twilight—  
O God! I heard them call  
To me for help and pity  
That could not help at all.

Oh, never will I forget you,  
My men that trusted me,  
More my sons than your fathers',  
For they could only see  
The little helpless babies  
And the young men in their pride.  
They could not see you dying,  
And hold you while you died.

Happy and young and gallant,  
They saw their first-born go,

But not the strong limbs broken  
And the beautiful men brought low,  
The piteous writhing bodies,  
The screamed, " Don't leave me, Sir,"  
For they were only your fathers  
But I was your officer.

## A CREED

OUT of the womb of time and dust of the years forgotten,  
Spirit and fire enclosed in mutable flesh and bone,  
Came by a road unknown the thing that is me for ever,  
The lonely soul of a man that stands by itself alone.

This is the right of my race, the heritage won by my fathers,  
Theirs by the years of fighting, theirs by the price they paid,  
Making a son like them, careless of hell or heaven,  
A man that can look in the face of the gods and be not afraid.

Poor and weak is my strength and I cannot war against heaven,  
Strong, too strong are the gods ; but there is one thing that  
I can

Claim like a man unshamed, the full reward of my virtues,  
Pay like a man the price for the sins I sinned as a man.

Now is the time of trial, the end of the years of fighting,  
And the echoing gates roll back on the country I cannot see.  
If it be life that waits I shall live for ever unconquered,  
If death I shall die at last strong in my pride and free.

VIMY RIDGE, 1916

## PEACE UPON EARTH

**U**NDER the sky of battle, under the arch of the guns,  
Where in a mad red torrent the river of fighting runs,  
Where the shout of a strong man sounds no more than a broken  
groan,  
And the heart of a man rejoicing stands up in its strength  
alone,  
There in the hour of trial ; and when the battle is spent,  
And we sit drinking together, laughing and well content,  
Deep in my heart I am hearing a little still voice that sings,  
“ Well, but what will you do when there comes an end of these  
things ? ”

Laughter, hard drinking and fighting, quarrels of friend and  
friend,  
The eyes of the men that trust us, of all these there is an end.  
No more in the raving barrage in one swift clamorous breath  
We shall jest and curse together on the razor-edge of death.  
Old days, old ways, old comrades, for ever and ever good-bye !

We shall walk no more in the twisted ways of the trenches, you  
and I,

For the nations have heard the tidings, they have sworn that  
wars shall cease,

And it's all one damned long Sunday walk down the straight,  
flat road of peace.

Yes, we shall be raptured again by the frock-coat's singular  
charm,

That goes so well with children and a loving wife on your arm,  
Treading a road that is paved with family dinners and teas,

A sensible dull suburban road planted with decorous trees,  
Till we come at last to the heaven our peaceable saints have  
trod,

Like the sort of church that our fathers built and called it a  
house of God,

And a God like a super-bishop in an apron and nice top-hat—

O God, you are God of battles. Forbid that we come to that !

God, you are God of soldiers, merry and rough and kind,

Give to your sons an earth and a heaven more to our mind,

Meat and drink for the body, laughter and song for the soul,

And fighting and clean quick death to end and complete the  
whole.

Never a hope of heaven, never a fear of hell,  
Only the knowledge that you are a soldier, and all is well,  
And whether the end be death or a merrier life be given,  
We shall have died in the pride of our youth—and that will be  
heaven.

*On the road to Fricourt, 1916*

## THE VOLUNTEER

I TOOK my heart from the fire of love,  
Molten and warm not yet shaped clear,  
And tempered it to steel of proof  
Upon the anvil-block of fear.

With steady hammer-strokes I made  
A weapon ready for the fight,  
And fashioned like a dagger-blade  
Narrow and pitiless and bright.

Cleanly and tearlessly it slew,  
But as the heavy days went on  
The fire that once had warmed it grew  
Duller, and presently was gone.

Oh, innocence and lost desire,  
I strive to kindle you in vain,  
Dead embers of a greying fire.  
I cannot melt my heart again.

1914-1916

## ON VIMY RIDGE

ON Vimy Ridge four months ago  
We lived and fought, my friends and I,  
And watched the kindly dawn come slow,  
Peace bringing from the eastern sky.  
Now I sit in a quiet town  
Remembering how I used to go  
Among the dug-outs up and down,  
On Vimy Ridge four months ago.

And often sitting here I've seen,  
As then I saw them every night,  
The friendly faces tired and keen  
Across the flickering candle-light,  
And heard their laughter gay and clear,  
And watched the fires of courage glow  
Above the scattered ash of fear,  
On Vimy Ridge four months ago.

Oh, friends of mine, where are you now ?  
Somewhere beneath the troubled sky,  
With earth above the quiet brow,  
Reader and Stalk for ever lie.  
But dead or living out or here  
I see the friends I used to know,  
And hear the laughter gay and clear,  
On Vimy Ridge four months ago.

## IN MEMORIAM

R. M. STALKER. MISSING, SEPTEMBER 1916

**A**S I go down the highway,  
And through the village street,  
I hear the pipers playing  
And the tramp of marching feet.  
The men I worked and fought with  
Swing by me four on four,  
And at the end you follow  
Whom I shall see no more.

Oh, Stalk, where are you lying?  
Somewhere and far away,  
Enemy hands have buried  
Your quiet contemptuous clay.  
There was no greeting given,  
No tear of friend for friend,  
From us when you flew over  
Exultant to the end.

I couldn't see the paper,  
I couldn't think that you  
Would never walk the highway  
The way you used to do.  
I turn at every footfall,  
Half-hoping, half-afraid  
To see you coming, later  
Than usual for parade.

The old Lairg clique is broken,  
I drove there yesterday,  
And the car was full of ghosts that sat  
Beside me all the way.  
Ghosts of old songs and laughter,  
Ghosts of the jolly three,  
That went the road together  
And go no more with me.

Oh, Stalk, but I am lonely,  
For the old days we knew,  
And the bed on the floor at Lesdos  
We slept in, I and you.

The joyful nights in billets  
We laughed and drank and swore—  
But the candle's burned out now, Stalk,  
In the mess at Henancourt.

The candle's burned out now, old man,  
And the dawn's come grey and cold,  
And I sit by the fire here  
Alone and sad and old.  
Though all the rest come back again,  
You lie in a foreign land,  
And the strongest link of all the chain  
Is broken in my hand.

II

OTHER POEMS



## THE KINGDOM OF THE DOWNS

**B**EYOND the woodland's shading,  
Beyond the sun-kissed field,  
Where laughs in joy unfading  
The garden of the weald,  
Look southward where uplifted  
Against the shining skies,  
In secret vesture shifted,  
The silent Downs arise.

Until you see delusive  
Flash from the guardian down  
A visioned land elusive,  
Dream of an unknown town,  
And longing for the wonder,  
Strive what you dare not ask,  
To rend the veil asunder  
And pluck away the mask.

Oh keep your spirit's vision  
Although your eyes be blind,  
Nor tempt the gods' derision  
Of him that cannot find,  
Lest you should lose the city  
That once afar you saw,  
And with it lose—ah, pity!—  
All that was yours before.

Better dream on for ever  
What once you dreamt was true,  
Ere knowledge can dis sever  
Your visioned truth from you,  
And from the wealden gazing  
Watch how the sunset crowns  
With dreamful beacons blazing  
Your kingdom of the Downs.

IN THE TRAIN, 1911

## TO THE UNKNOWN LOVE

I CANNOT see you in the light  
Or find you in the day,  
For when the sun springs up at dawn  
I think you slip away.

I wait until the night is come  
To pass beyond the veil,  
And then I find you in the land  
Of the unuttered tale.

Then gazing out across the night  
I see with glad surmise  
The shadows of your loosened hair,  
The depth of your grave eyes.

ST PAUL'S, 1912

## TO CATULLUS

### A RONDEL

**L**AUGHTER and tears to you the gods once gave,  
Those silver tears upon your brother's grave,  
And golden laughter in your lady's bower,  
And silver-gold in your love's bitter hour.  
You showed us, burdened with our hopes and fears,  
Laughter and tears.

Poor tears that fell upon the thirsty sands,  
Poor laughter stifled with ungentle hands,  
Poor heart that was so sweet to laugh and cry,  
Your joyful, mournful songs shall never die,  
But show us still across the shadowing years  
Laughter and tears.

ST PAUL'S, 1912

## MALLAIG BAY

I AM sickened of the south and the kindness of the downs,  
And the weald that is a garden all the day,  
And I'm weary for the islands and the Scur that always frowns,  
And the sun rising over Mallaig Bay.

I am sickened of the pleasant down and pleasant weald below,  
And the meadows where the little breezes play,  
And I'm weary for rain-cloud over stormy Coolin's brow,  
And the wind blowing into Mallaig Bay.

I am sickened of the people that have ease in what they earn,  
The happy folk who have forgot to pray,  
And I'm weary for the faces that are sorrowful and stern,  
And the boats coming into Mallaig Bay.

SUSSEX, 1912

## VERSES TO TWO CHILDREN

WITH A COPY OF LEAR'S "NONSENSE RHYMES"

**D**ARLINGS, if I may call you so,  
I fear that I can only sing  
Of sorrows that your elders know.  
To you I send a better thing.

Oh may you wander many a day  
Across the great Gromboolian plain,  
Because, when I was far away,  
You came and brought me back again.

Because, when darkness covered me,  
You came and took me by the hand,  
And opened my blind eyes to see  
The little hills of Fairyland.

BRORA, 1912

## IN THE NIGHT

**G**ALLANT fellows, tall and strong,  
Oh your strength was not for long,  
Now within its bed alone  
Quiet lies your nerveless bone.

Merry maidens young and fair,  
Now your heads are bleached and bare,  
Grinning mouths that smiled so sweet,  
Buried deep the dancing feet.

Men and maidens fair and brave  
Resting in your darkened grave,  
Have you left the light behind,  
Will you never feel the wind ?

Oh I know not if you may,  
But from eve till dawn of day  
Terror holds me in my bed,  
Terror of the living dead.

## CAROL OF THE INNOCENTS

**A**S I look out upon the sky  
And watch the clouds come driving by,  
I know when for a moment's space  
I see a laughing baby's face,  
It is the Innocents that ride  
Across the sky at Christmastide.

Above the world they dance and play,  
And they are happy all the day,  
And welcome on the joyous morn  
A little king among them born.  
God looks upon them as they go,  
And laughs to see them frolic so.

Their little clouds are stained with red  
To show how shamefully they bled,

And all above the world they sing  
A carol to their childish King.  
It is the Innocents that ride  
Across the sky at Christmastide.

CHRISTMAS, 1913

## WANDERER'S DESIRE

TO E. J. S. AND F. O. T.

**I** CANNOT sleep for thinking  
Of things that I have seen  
About the highways of the world,  
Where fields are fresh and green,  
And hedges lie on either hand  
With a white road between.

I cannot rest for dreaming  
Of places I have known,  
The grasses of the lonely hills,  
The meadows and the sown,  
And all the secrets which appear  
To men who walk alone.

The comrades of my walking  
Are calling me to go,

And stroll with them across the hills  
    Along a road we know,  
Past inns where we can drink and talk  
    When storm-winds bring the snow.

I cannot rise and follow  
    The way they're calling me,  
So I sit dreaming all the day,  
    And all the day I see  
The open highways of the world  
    Where I would like to be.

OXFORD, 1913

## GROWING PAINS

### I

**M**Y virtue is gone from me. Nevermore  
Shall I see all the flowers and grasses plain,  
But only sit and think how once I saw,  
And only pray that I may see again.  
And in my ears all melody will die,  
And on my lips the songs I make will fade,  
And I shall only hear in memory  
A far-off echo of the songs I made.  
And the old happy vision of God's grace,  
Where I have mingled with eternal light,  
Will comfort me no more, but in its place  
There will be darkness and eternal night;  
And faintly in the darkness you will move,  
And I shall keep the memory of love.

## II

I cannot see your face, I cannot see  
The hair back-sweeping from your candid brow,  
For night eternal overshadows me,  
And eyes that saw you once are sightless now ;  
I cannot hear the music of your voice  
That was so beautiful while I could hear,  
But only wait upon you and rejoice  
To know that in the darkness you are near.  
Oh come to me, my dear, and loose my chain,  
And with your magic break the evil spell,  
And bring me back into the light again  
To the fair country where I used to dwell.  
For now my ears are deaf, my eyes are blind,  
And endless darkness gathers in my mind.

## III

The end has come for me, the end has come,  
The fairies have rung out their silver bell,  
And after time will find and leave me dumb  
With no more tales of fairyland to tell.

The end has come for me, the end of all,  
Of song half-uttered and of quick desire,  
And hopes that strained to heaven in their fall,  
And high dreams fashioned out of clay and fire.  
The earth is black about me, and the sun  
Is blotted out with darkness overhead,  
There is no hope to comfort me not one,  
For love has stolen away, and faith has fled,  
And life that once was mine has passed me by,  
And I am desolate and shall not die.

#### IV

There is a city built with walls of gold,  
Which is the birthplace of the fairy kings,  
Full of strange songs and stories yet untold,  
And all the happiness that childhood brings.  
The city's gates are open night and day,  
And night and day the travellers ride through,  
And many that have wandered far away  
Would reach again the happy town they knew.  
But they can only watch the vision die,  
And hear the music cease along the strand,

And from the merry dancing-ring no cry  
Comes down the falling wind to where they stand,  
And so they turn away again to try  
The darkness of the undiscovered land.

OXFORD, 1913

## SONNET

**E**ACH time we meet, my dear, I fancy you,  
A maiden both familiar and strange,  
For still I see a girl I never knew  
And see my own dear love without a change ;  
And while young love is born within my heart,  
As on his birthday half a year ago,  
I mourn that we are kept so long apart,  
And welcome joyfully the love I know.  
As when a rover under foreign skies  
From some clear hill beholds a smiling plain,  
And long-forgotten meadows meet his eyes,  
And memory awakens in his brain,  
And suddenly he sees with glad surprise  
The open doorway of his home again.

OXFORD, 1913

TO ———

**Y**OU have destroyed my early loves,  
The grasses wet with dew,  
And hills upon whose gentle breast  
My careless boyhood grew.  
I have no happiness at all  
Except to be with you.

I have forgotten all the words  
And laughter of my friends,  
The little inns that are like homes,  
The road that dips and bends ;  
I hear them like a far-off song  
That fails at last and ends.

It's little use for us to grieve  
For things that cannot be ;  
You can't give back the happiness  
You took away from me.  
Give me yourself, for night and day  
It's only you I see.

OXFORD, 1913

## DEAD YOUTH

**T**HE days of dreams are over,  
The days of songs are done,  
So bid good-bye, young lover,  
To boyhood's dying sun ;  
Good-bye to joy and sadness,  
Good-bye to sun and rain,  
And to the swift spring madness  
That will not come again.

Oh days of careless laughter,  
Oh nights of sudden tears,  
We shall not know hereafter  
Forgotten hopes and fears.  
Oh dreams that bide no longer  
With young hearts waxen cold,  
Are lovely things no stronger,  
And must you too grow old ?

Yes, memory is flying,  
And golden dreams must fade,  
And all our loves are dying  
With us beneath the shade ;  
And buds that ripen never  
Their bloomless leaves have shed,  
For youth is dead for ever,  
And all his thoughts are dead.

1913

## AT THE END

**I**N the dim years, when earth's last sun is setting,  
And all the lamps of heaven are burning low,  
Will the gods grant remembrance or forgetting  
Of joys and sorrows that possess us now ?

When the day ends and there is no to-morrow,  
Will there be thoughts alive to hurt us yet ?  
Shall we remember, keeping all our sorrow,  
Or lose our little joys if we forget ?

Oh sure, since joy and pain we may not sever,  
Better it is to take the whole alloy,  
And keep immortal grief, than lose for ever  
Our slight inheritance of immortal joy.

1913

## ECCLESIASTES

OH vanity of vanities  
And following of wind  
Through the dim avenues and deep  
Abysses of the mind ;  
When will our ears be deaf at last,  
When will our eyes be blind ?

Oh vanity of vanities  
And lighter than the air,  
And restless hearts unsatisfied  
With searching everywhere ;  
When will the restless heart be still,  
And loosened from its care ?

Oh vanity of sorrowing  
And emptiness of mirth,

And wandering fires of thought in clay  
Imprisoned at our birth,  
When will the wandering fires go out,  
And earth return to earth ?

OXFORD, 1913

## THE LOST LANDS

“ O H where are the old kingdoms,  
Where is the ancient way,

And the remembered city  
Where once I used to play ? ”

“ You stand within the kingdom,  
You walk the city’s street,  
And still there throng about you  
The folk you used to meet.”

“ Where are the merry voices  
And laughter trouble-free,  
And where are my old comrades  
That used to play with me ? ”

“ Their merry voices call you  
But you will not reply.  
They touch your hand in welcome,  
But now you pass them by.”

“ Where is my love departed  
With her delightful eyes,  
And heart too free for sorrow,  
And lips too proud for sighs ? ”  
“ Along the road beside you  
Your true love walks and near,  
But she may call for ever,  
And you will never hear.”

OXFORD, 1915

## CLYTEMNĒSTRA

OUT of the drinking cup,  
Out of my own hearth-fire,  
The taint of blood goes up,  
The scent of the burning pyre.  
When the feasters' shout is high,  
Or the spinning maidens sing,  
I hear the dead man's cry,  
The dead who was my king.

For this is an ageless thing,  
And the blood runs fresh again  
In the cleansing draught from the spring  
And the storèd wine I drain.  
And the joyous marriage-song,  
And the drinking-song at the board,  
Is the voice that sobbed so long  
In the agony of my lord.

Oh dark stern face of him  
    I wedded and could not love,  
Oh terrible eyes grown dim  
    And torn black hair above,  
Oh hands so strong in fight,  
    So weak in the folding net,  
Dead feet that by day and night  
    Follow the slayer yet,

Lo I am drawing near  
    To the door of the house of death,  
Must I for ever hear  
    The sound of the labouring breath,  
Must I for ever see  
    The murdered body lie,  
And on my own roof-tree  
    The blood that will not dry ?

1914

## DEDICATION

FOR "THE REMEMBERED GODS"

**I**F in my song the heart of love  
Looks from another maiden's eyes,  
Where on the hills of Morven move  
The kings too proud for Paradise;  
Though to your ears the autumn brings  
No sounds of crying, you will know  
The murmur of immortal things  
In this dark tale of long ago.

If in the silence of the nights  
The song of Angus calls no more,  
If all the sea is ringed with lights  
And no waves moaning on the shore.  
Though Balor sleeping on the hills  
Forgets the dew in his drenched hair,  
You will remember ancient ills  
Pitying another Alastair.

## THREE SONGS FROM THE REMEMBERED GODS

### ANGUS' SONG

**A**RE the gods forgotten in Morven of the hinds,  
The beauty that slew men the golden eyes that shone  
The gods that will be walking on the rocks of the winds  
That little men would die for the love of looking on ?

Are the gods forgotten in Morven of the stags,  
The old gods, the fair gods that were too high for love,  
The white feet pressing on the grasses of the crags,  
The black hair hidden in the black clouds above ?

The gods are forgotten in Morven of the glens,  
The sun shines brightly and gentle is the day.  
Like snow in summer carries, like mist upon the bens,  
The lovely gods of darkness are vanished away.

### ALASTAIR'S SONG

Summer is gone at last and autumn leaves are falling,  
And through the naked trees the wind is breathing low.  
Let us arise and go for the old gods are calling,  
The beautiful cruel gods we loved so long ago.

Let us arise and go, for far beyond the city  
We hear the old gods singing the years from which we came.  
The merry heartless years that knew not pain or pity,  
The happy lustful years that knew not fear or shame.

The bitter music calls, and we must follow after,  
Back through the gentler years to the old time again.  
To wake their lovely mirth, to move the gods to laughter,  
This is the end of man, the full reward of pain.

The golden eyes aglow, the silver laughter ringing,  
Shall we not suffer pain for lovely things as these?  
Let us arise and go, for the old gods are singing,  
The beautiful cruel gods that mock our miseries.

## THE MEMORY SONG

Long ago beneath the moon  
In a corrie of the hills  
We forgot our ancient ills  
Dancing to a wizard tune.  
We remembered song and spell  
Chanted in a Lochlainn rune,  
Flower of Morven, it was well  
Long ago beneath the moon.

Now the moon is full again,  
And the song of Angus cries  
Underneath the summer skies  
Till the nights of summer wane.  
Follow now while still you may,  
Ere his music calls in vain,  
When the harps of Angus play  
Now the moon is full again.

Flower of Morven, long ago  
In the corrie where we met,  
Did you think you could forget,  
Did you dream you would not know

Lips that sang the lover's tune,  
And the heart that loved you so ?  
Did forgetfulness come soon,  
Flower of Morven, long ago ?

Oh, remember me once more,  
Now the mist is on the hills  
And the harp of Angus thrills  
Moaning waves along the shore,  
For the songs I made for you,  
For the love that was before,  
For the heart that still is true,  
Oh, remember me once more.

## NEIL'S SONG

*From "THE LATER WOOING"*

**N**OW the day is growing old  
And the shadows pace  
Slower now, and now more cold  
O'er the water's face.

When my heart is ebbing low  
With the ebbing tide,  
When the happy visions go,  
Why should life abide ?

Now with whispers from the sea  
The little winds go by  
Moaning, moaning hopelessly  
That the day should die.  
When the hours of memory fill  
All my heart with pain,  
When my dreams go down the hill  
Why should life remain ?

Now the world is burning out  
Mountain, glen and sea.  
From their barrows all about  
The dead are calling me.  
When my hope is flown and dead  
With my love of you,  
When the heart of life is fled,  
Shall not life go too ?

1914

## OLD AGE

**I**N the old years that creep on us so fast,  
When Time goes by us with a halting tread,  
Shall we sit still and ponder at the last  
The young swift years of love that will be dead ?  
Shall we look back upon the passionate years,  
Where in a maze our younger figures move,  
Instinct with half-forgotten hopes and fears,  
And gaze anew on the mirage of love ?

Yes, we two, like old actors at the play,  
Watching the beating of a tinsel heart,  
Will laugh and weep, and clap our hands, and say,  
“ How sadly that young lover played his part  
That loved her true and dared not tell her so,  
And she that loved him dared not let him see, ”  
And we shall watch the hurts of long ago,  
And clap our hands at our old tragedy.

For we shall understand, remembering  
    How he spoke thus and she would answer so,  
And then we shall see clearly everything  
    That was so dark in youth's old puppet-show,  
And gazing on the far-off stage where stand  
    The misty figures that were you and I,  
Each in the darkness will stretch out a hand  
    To touch the hand of love before we die.

OXFORD, 1914

## THE HEARTLESS VOICE

**Y**OUR voice is like the fairy harps  
The wandering shepherd hears,  
That tell of laughter without joy,  
And light unsaddened tears.

You laugh and I can never tell  
If you are glad or no,  
You weep and cannot understand  
The things that hurt me so.

But still your eager, heartless voice  
Is calling night and day,  
And I must follow like the men  
That hear the fairies play.

1914

## HOPE

**W**HERE is the life of springs forgotten,  
The happy life of years grown old ?  
Their bloomless buds are dead and rotten,  
The suns that warmed their leaves are cold.  
And we that walk the ruined garden  
Watch the dry breath of winter harden  
In all its beds the barren mould.

Where is the joy of daily meeting  
In spring-time when the sun was high ?  
The winter suns are pale and fleeting,  
The gathering clouds o'ercast the sky.  
And we that walk alone remember  
The fires whose last undying ember  
Will burn our hearts until we die.

Oh, heart of youth, too full of sorrow,  
Be strong and hold your sorrow fast.

The bitter day and bitter morrow,  
That hurt you now, will soon be past.  
Winter and spring will end hereafter,  
An end of tears, an end of laughter,  
And you shall have content at last.

There where the flowers and grasses cover  
The lips that laugh, the eyes that weep,  
Lover shall meet again with lover,  
No man shall break the tryst they keep.  
You shall fulfil desire with dreaming  
There where all life is inward seeming,  
There where the heart of life is sleep.

1914

## THE LAST MEETING

LAST time you met me shadowed white,  
A very queen for stateliness,  
And all the jewels of the night  
Were tangled in your ivory dress.  
Your eyes were strange, your lovely smile  
As though we never met before—  
I saw you such a little while,  
Who shall not see you evermore.

God knows the gates were strong between,  
But still my trumpet might have blown  
Had you not looked so great a queen,  
Had I but seen you all alone.  
But there we sat the dinner through  
And talked like strangers of the war.  
I only spoke an hour with you,  
Who now shall speak with you no more.

Maybe I waited over-long,  
You spoke no word to tell me so.  
Perhaps the gates might be too strong  
For any blast that I could blow—  
Ah well, it hardly matters now,  
My whispering ghost drifts through the rain,  
The shroud of death is at my brow,  
I shall not come to you again.

1915

## VALE ATQUE AVE

**I**S it good-bye for ever  
For us beneath the sun?  
The lads and girls go over,  
With every girl a lover,  
And never a lonely one,  
But I shall see you never  
Till all my days are done.

I could not read your letter,  
I could not think it true,  
Seeing the lands and hedges  
And the long naked ridges  
And skies serene and blue.  
Though worse should come or better  
I walk no more with you.

And I saw the winter weather  
And the joyous days of spring.

In all the years before us  
God knows what fate hangs o'er us,  
What good or evil thing,  
But we'll walk no more together  
Whatever time may bring.

Love is not dead but sleeping,  
Youth is not spent in vain.  
Another hand will hold me,  
And other arms enfold me,  
To feel in every vein  
The blood of youth go leaping ;  
But you come not again.

You've gone, and with you flying  
The grace of life is past,  
And I go robbed and wanting  
Till with a little panting  
My labouring life ebbs fast,  
And I look up in dying  
And see you at the last.





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