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NEW RECESSIONAL  
AND OTHER POEMS

Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd.  
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in *The Observer* and *Time and Tide*,  
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EDWARD THOMPSON

NEW RECESSIONAL  
AND OTHER POEMS

SECKER & WARBURG

1942

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## NEW RECESSIONAL

WE have come to the end of The Waste Land :  
Its wind-carved static waves of herbless sand  
(Passionless central sea long sunken  
To sailless shoreless sahara).  
Grumbling and stumbling we passed  
The cheating wells whose waters were stagnant lies  
(We could not drink of the waters, for they were bitter,  
Therefore the name was called Marah) :  
The skeleton dumps that were singing caravans—  
Death's picnic had left its litter.  
Yes, this was a poet's skull  
(That quick beady glitter ?  
Those are rats that were his eyes ;  
They gnaw at the thongs of skin that have cracked and  
shrunken.)  
I knew him well. A fellow of infinite jest,  
Infinite hope—and infinite zest !  
Where were our guides ? They had caught some uplift  
cackle ;  
Aaron and Moses had joined the Oxford Group.  
They took up the Nazi Moloch's tabernacle,  
They followed through night a smirking and social star.  
Day swooned on day, drugged with the all-drowsing sun :  
Night was a vigil set for the *kbamsin's* blast.  
High in the glaze-brimmed vault the vultures' vans  
Shadowed our kestrel spirits that feared to rise,  
Till dusk came leaden and dull,  
Lit with the dead men's stare—the desert lilith's glare—  
And our bodies flung down, like the drought-struck flowers  
that droop.  
Yet even those hours have run.  
We have come to some end at last.

We have come to some end. Only remain  
Rock-ambush : masked pitfall : the climb  
Hand over hand :  
Cliff and bastion manned  
By an unseen foe :  
The grapple in darkness, the strain :  
The trudge over treeless plateau  
Swept by the icewind, clogged with the muffling snow.  
Then the steep ways down, where afar  
Through jungle and swamp, labyrinthine brake,  
Plunging, a trampled tormented green snake,  
In arrowy swift race  
The Descender is hurled  
To a lifeless lake,  
A dead world.  
There will be check, will be thrust,  
Amid rushes that shake, over reedmats that quake :  
Ford-ambush and fight  
In the brambles, the asp-holes, the cobra-thickets :  
On our hips, at our throat,  
The Rivergod's wrestle and clutch, his swelled hood,  
Lightning stroke of his fang.  
Then toil and stiff push through the plain,  
Step in step with the dust :  
Cloaked burrow, thorn pampas, humped tussock, lumped clod :  
And again  
Armed wadi : hill-ambush : upward battle and plod.

At the end we shall doubtless find  
New Aarons, new golden calves to dance to,  
New rackets, new jazz tunes to prance to,  
New sorts of publicist, glamour girl, go-getter.  
But we say  
The rackets will somehow be different, the impostors a fresh  
kind.  
We shall not get back our dead or the lost years,  
God will not wipe away all tears,  
But the Baalim of snowfield, stark height,  
The Baalim of underground streams,  
Will be Baalim who bring us new dreams,  
They will grant us respite  
From dry bones and mirage and sleek sand.  
So we say they are good.  
That even these famine-crazed lions which range  
From their dens sunk in Jordan's green Pride  
To prow on the pilgrim-track, haunt the hillside,  
Are in some wise better—yes, better—  
Than hyenas that slunk round our pickets.  
There will surely be difference, be change !  
Not to anything specially grand  
Or to much of much note,  
Something rich and strange,  
But a change ;  
Yes, a change, anyway !  
So we thank God and say  
We have done with the dead time,  
We have come to the end of The Waste Land.  
Of the years which were sand sand sand,  
And still sand.

## REPENTING PRODIGAL

I WILL arise

but will not

go unto my father.

For he and I are poles apart.

He has an old, I a young, heart.

He would not understand me ; he would rather

Stun me with dull intolerable platitudes,

Strut in ridiculous antique attitudes

Victorian,

Pretorian,

*Fin de siècle*, Regency, Antediluvian.

He is proto-organic,

Sententious and static, whilst I am volcanic.

His spirit is snow, by the centuries piled and chilled ;

Mine energy, momentarily filled

From ardours Vesuvian.

Besides, I have learnt so much

With my harlots and swine, we have lost all point of touch.

We look with different eyes ;

And his are stupid and pleased, while mine are sad and wise.

Yet

One must not forget

To be kind and just, to even one's father.

He loathed I should go :

And he must have been thinking since : there are things he  
will know

That he did not know once.

He may not be the sleek callous dunce

That I left—may no longer be set

In his creaking stiffness : conceit may be shaken.

Oh, have I too carelessly hastily taken

For granted that, while I have grown into marvellous light,

He has stayed put, in unteachable night ?

Let me give him a chance ! I will rise,

And I think that perhaps, after all,

I will go to my father.

## ODE FOR A NOT TOO SOLEMN MUSIC

“ DO THE DEAD TALK ? ”—a Dean and Bathing Belle  
Offer to tell.

“ SOUVENIR NUMBERS ”—each that buys possesses  
Pictures of crooners, crooks, baby princesses.

“ I HAVE DONE WITH LOVE, Declares Miss Attadaisy ” :

“ FILM QUEEN WALKS OUT ; Says HOLLYWOOD’S  
JUST CRAZY ” :

“ GREAT DAY FOR BRITAIN’S QUADS ” : “ NEWS OF  
THE QUINS ” :

“ BISHOP PROCLAIMS THE AGE IS ONE OF SINS.”

Now my co-mates and brothers in exile,

Pack up your troubles ! *damn* you, smile, smile, smile !

Yet I have seen the dread behind your faces.

I know the secret places

Where terror lurks—the fright that comes with pain—

The sense of lessening strength and tiring brain—

Of life gone by, of vanished hope and chances—

The ill that is, the good that merely seems,

The ghost in each, whose visage shakes our dreams.

I think with you, our treatment has been rotten ;

“ God’s Englishmen ” our Patron has forgotten.

This is no way to treat His Anglo-Saxons !

With drums and trombones, saxophones and klaxons,

With blare of “ dramas ” here and there “ romances,”

With bang and clash and clang and crash of trumpets,

With such a mob of boomsters, barkers, strumpets,

To deave this generation to the tomb,

Like cattle yelled and bellowed to their doom.

## ANNO DOMINI

### I. *The Year of the Lord*

i

In the Name of the Merciful, the All Compassionate !  
In the Name of the Lord !  
In the Year of the Lord !

This was the year there was no spring.  
It was a long year, more than the years of a man.  
I remember, it began  
When March by the Moldau bade the catkins waken  
And earth and air were shaken  
And mind and heart were shaken  
With thunder and throb of engines, of tanks and planes,  
With tremor and throb of fear in sinews and veins,  
And night was cleft by a demon's shout,  
By Lucifer's throat that rang out  
From the mountain fastness, the bastioned vastness,  
Which Evil the craven had drawn about  
Itself from the terror it rained without.  
Man's eyes that look on fate  
Dimmed at bloodless eyes of hate,  
Glare of death that walked and stalked  
And sat night and day before his gate.

In the wilderness the Voice of one that cried,  
" Prepare ye in the wilderness the Way of the Lord !  
Make ready in the desert a highway for Our God ! "

There was no Voice that cried !

They that said they heard it lied,

As the people rose from praying, rose from sleep to playing,  
Saying,

" Though misery flood and rise

Till it darken sun and skies,

Till it overspread the earth as the waters of the sea,

What is that to thee or me ?

Have faith in God who built our English land !

He flung about us like a sheltering hand

His winds and tides, He set us for a light

To guide the nations where they sit in night.

Health and wealth to us His own He giveth.

I know that My Redeemer liveth !

And, though He smite the peoples with His flail,

Why should our grace of decorous worship fail ?

What are they to me or thee ?

Why should their grief strike Romance dumb ?

Silence churchly chiming ?

Husky voices rhyming,

Eyes of blue and you,

Moon and June and lovers true ?

Let the gigolo strut and strum !

Let the deep-toned organ sound ! "

River of Nonsense roaring down the Strand,  
 Torrent of Humbug drenching all the land,  
 Imbecile gusts that mouth and whoop and wuther !  
 " LOVE'S TEN COMMANDMENTS : by MAE WEST " ;  
 " Authors that DEBS MUST READ " ; " Fashion in Lips " ;  
 " Lovely Women's Amazing Duel with Whips " ;  
 Something on Women, by June ;  
 " I SEE AN ELECTROCUTION : VISCOUNT BLANK " ;  
 " YOU CAN BE FULL OF GLAMOUR ! BEAUTY OF RANK  
 REVEALS HER SECRET ! " " YOU CAN LEARN TO  
 CROON ! "  
 " The Life of Shirley Temple, by Her Mother. "  
     Puritan Sabbath, painted once so black,  
     Puritan Sabbath, much-maligned ! come back !

Miss Kitty and Miss Lydia Bennet ! *heil !*  
 The Age is yours, you run it.  
 (But, God ! such *millions* of them ! *Need* you have done it ?)

Yet (since some tosh or other  
 Must rot our brains) rejoice that for a while  
 We cherish in this silver-sceptred isle  
 Sub-adolescent idiocies like these,  
 Innocuous ardours, harmless fatuities,  
 And hear far-off (like horns from Elfland blowing)  
 The bullfrog Fascist's boasting on his quag,  
 And Nazi's bloodier though not sillier brag.  
 Pour in our contribution  
 To man's eternal griefs and their solution,  
 And let us with a gladsome mind—  
 A sovran people; equal with our kind—  
 Join in the time's great march, with mop and mowing,  
 Goose-stepping, gadarening,  
 Chuckling, truckling, strutting, rutting, preening.

In the wilderness there was a Voice that cried !  
 Unto you that Voice replied,

“ Upon you shall come  
 All the righteous blood shed in these years,  
 From the blood of Chinese coolies in Shanghai  
 Whom the warships caught and battered,  
 Blood of slain  
 Crofters of the far Manchurian plain  
 (Whom the towering millet hid from view,  
 Whom your own shut eyelids hid from view),  
 To the blood of Spain  
 Whom you trapped and slew  
 Between your altar of non-intervention  
 And your sanctuary of anti-communism.  
 Blood of every nation  
 Martyred since its folk were poor and few,  
 Martyred since far off and little known to you,  
 All these things must come upon this generation.”

## II. *By the Waters of Babylon*

By the waters of Babylon,  
By Isis and Thames,  
By Hudson and Tigris and Ganges,  
By Tiber and Seine,  
I Ezra the Scribe  
Put up ink-horn and stile :  
And I wandered.

It was noon and no man had hired them.  
High market and no man desired them.  
So I wandered

And saw

The Son of Man stand  
In the crowd at the pithead : his eyes  
Dragged my face, as I passed him, for news.

He was laid off : disbanded : remanded.  
He waited in wards :  
He hung about boards :  
I saw in his hand  
The unopened telegram flutter.

The winter's keen flaw  
Thrust a knife in his bones :  
And hunger and dread  
Twirled a dart at each nerve.

His place was in queues :  
His name mud,

His life's pattern  
Was move on and trudge.  
His wife was a slattern,  
His daughter  
A drudge.

He was brought up in droves : as he stood  
At attention he shook ; at a nod,  
As a sheep to the slaughter  
From court unto firing squad  
Led,  
He went to his rest,  
His trade union card pinned to his breast.

Plague-festered, God-smitten,  
He crawled on splayed limbs and begged food.  
He salaamed : he broke stones  
In famine : I doled him relief.  
On the desert they tossed him and squandered.

He trembled, dissembled, was craven ;  
He marched in chained file.  
On his palms was engraven  
The stigma of tribe—  
It was chattel and wastrel and thief.  
On his vesture and thigh this was written :  
Cannon fodder and labour reserve.

He was sick and infirm :  
His life came to its term.  
Drink-sodden he stooped to the gutter  
For cigarette ends.

I saw his lips mutter :  
He walked without friends.

### III. *Was It Nothing to You?*

Was it nothing to you, all ye that passed by,  
When sorrow came on those your rulers' word  
Struck from guard and sword ?  
Was there ever sorrow, since the world began,  
Such as sorrow which your rulers sent on these ?  
Sorrow of a valiant folk who died  
Because they trusted far-off strength whose state  
Proudly claimed that it was great—  
Sorrow which their dying breath made yours,  
Sorrow which the days that came made yours.  
When you saw Paris compassed about with armies  
Did the mind remember ?  
Back to Munich, madness, and September ?  
Munich's madness, Munich's witless gladness.  
Munich's wakeful morrow,  
Munich's sorrow, sorrow  
That you laid on these ?

When you saw Paris compassed about with armies,  
When the flames ascended  
Of a mighty kingdom's burning,  
The cry arose of a mighty nation's dying,  
The dolour deepened of a maddened people flying  
Down ways death dogged and clogged and bogged with  
slaughter,  
Eyes emptied of all prayer  
Sped by nor cast one glance  
At the broken calvary, the crucifix untended,  
The votive garlands shrivelled, the candles sputtered out :

At the helpless Son of Man,  
Before whose bullet-splintered countenance  
The apollyons spread their wings,  
Rejoicing spread their dragon wings and sprawled and  
    diced  
For the seamless robe unpriced,  
In the Place of a Skull called France.  
When you saw Paris compassed about with armies,  
Did the mind remember ?

The spring failed then—in the hour of her returning :  
The lilies drooped in the Valley of Humiliation,  
Where the shepherd lad his pipe laid aside,  
And the herb called heartsease withered that he wore.  
Men went no more, no more,  
To the woods, for the laurels were cut  
(The prophet laurel fallen, and to earth  
Fallen the glorious dwelling—silent the babbling water).  
The paths to the chalet of the shepherdess were shut :  
The fountains of the nymphs were choked and dried :  
And the shepherd maid who wept  
And had great pity for her realm of France—  
Men said that Joan, and Christ  
And his Apostles slept.

#### IV. *In the Guildhall of Babylon*

In the Guildhall of Babylon was a Feast.  
We brought out our vessels of gold,  
Gifts of the Furies and Pities, sack of a thousand cities,  
Spoil of dead empires our fathers had beaten down.  
Lion-clawed and bull-bodied our winged gods  
Stood ranged and spaced round the hall.  
Bel and Asshur stared from their stone eyes.

We drank wine and praised our gods of gold.

“ My Lords ! ladies and gentlemen ! Pray, silence ! ”

In that same hour the fingers of a hand  
Came forth and wrote by the gilt candlesticks,  
On the polished whiteness, against the flickering brightness,  
Like a crab that crawls on snow, limping sinister slow,  
Blackly clearly etched.  
There was no more need to call for silence.

We sent then for a man they had not invited,  
Not that he had been slighted  
But his name was not on the Chamberlain's list.  
A scholar and author of sorts,  
He was known to take some interest in politics,  
Had foretold (so they said) things which had come to pass  
(He took no credit for this—as the haulm ends in grain,  
Even so, he remarked, events in their causes showed plain).  
The late King had been impressed  
(Like so many, he took considerable stock in astrology)  
And (just before he became such an ass)  
Had gone so far as to propose his name for election  
To the Susa Athenæum (the Committee for Selection  
Turned it down, the day His Majesty put himself out to grass).

The fellow was brought in now. He proved nothing much to  
look at ;

He was small and had the stooped shoulders of a student.  
I remember, his trousers were frayed at the knees,  
His garments were decent but old.  
He did not seem interested in our gods of gold  
'Or even the portraits of peers on the wall,  
But said he could interpret the writing.  
It was grisly and exciting !  
I am bound to admit that he left one a sense of unease !  
But a man who traffics in eagles and he-goats and dragons,  
With Gabriel and Michael and beings with wings,  
And in general with suchlike fabulous things,  
Who mixes theology zoology,  
Sees the world in a red light.  
So we passed round the flagons.

Darius the braggart we knew  
Was camped at the gates, he had battered  
A slim gap somewhere ; he planned fresh assault,  
    this was true.  
But against such resources as ours ?  
We should break it !  
We agreed that the City could take it.  
Our own and our Allies' great powers  
Would bring him to wreck !  
We should muddle through  
As we always do,  
We should win the one battle that mattered  
And closed the campaign.  
So we raised our champagne,  
Clinked glasses and cheered when they robed him in purple.  
We stood when the King's shaking hands  
Hung a chain of gold on his neck  
And, quaking and fumbling,  
Pinned on his breast  
The Order of the Babylonian Empire.  
We clapped when our monarch's commands  
Bade the Herald proclaim this man our Third Ruler.  
I was near, so I saw the whole show.

The man did not appear to be listening !  
Or was listening as if he heard  
A sound of foundations crumbling, of hovel  
    and palace and ziggurat tumbling.  
As a mule when it is saddled, he submitted indifferently ;  
In his eyes was a look ironic, his lips moved to himself.  
“ *This night*  
*Shall Belshazzar the Chaldean be slain !*  
*And—this chain ?* ”

He fingered it as though it were made of cheap glass.

## V. *The Eagles Gather*

Where the carcass lay,  
Grim and gay  
There were the newshawks gathered together—  
Our Ace Reporter : our lady of wealth and charm and address.

They were in the right hotel.  
They were there till the bursting of foul weather,  
They were there for the breaking of the stress.

There they chummed with the right people,  
There met Gladys Maureen Gwen and Tess,  
There ran into Jumbo Fruity Jim,  
Into Tiger Tiny Beaky Bob and Tim.

As the thunders muttered,  
As the wisecracks spluttered,  
As it neared the hour of zero  
Heroine and hero  
Hung above the sliding rim,  
Watched the lava boss and swell;  
Watched for me and you  
The nilometers of Hell.  
Then went back with doubled zest,  
Back to Jumbo Fruity and the rest,  
Back to Beaky Maureen Gladys Gwen and Bob.

They had talked with Adolf Hermann Himmler Hess,  
With the Duce and Ciano : they had peered in Stalin's brain :  
Over cocktails Edda told them all her mind.  
They had found the things they ought to find.

They were very very lucky !  
They were nearly left behind.  
But they caught by special favour the last train.  
But they joined their frantic antic friends again,  
Joined their telephoning friends again !  
With the last of the last petrol,  
In the last car to get through,  
Past the trudging drudging mob,  
High-packed prams, cats, parrots, dogs, despairing faces  
(Just like going to The Races !),  
Spun excited and were last to board the boat.  
They were last to board the boat !  
Then they wrote their thrilling " sagas "—  
And we knew !

They were stern to Europe's folly :  
Just but not indulgent critics : grim  
(Yet rather jolly !),  
They allowed,  
Though a saddening maddening snob,  
Far from democratic  
(Very far from democratic,  
Casual shiftless drifting planless dumb erratic),  
Yet the Englishman is best  
Of a most disheartening crowd ;  
That his Isle guards Freedom's moat.  
London took it ! She was plucky !

(Then gay wings shook out with a will !  
Rumour whispered a new kill.)

They were gallant ! they were swell !  
Did a first-class job,  
Served us faithfully and well.  
Yes. They did us very well.

VI. *May, 1940*

Now in their courses

The sentinel stars halt, watchful ; Sea and Land  
Stake their opposèd forces—

Work of man's hand

Awaits the elements and their shattering thunder  
Breaking his slow-built dreams, his hopes, asunder.

Eyes tensely drawn from scanning

The paths of tumbling sea and desolate air !  
Mind dazed with thought and planning !

Well may your actions fare !

Your straining dusk, your seven-month vigil blended  
Of doubt and guess—God be your shield !—have ended.

VII. *England, June, 1940*

We who saw England once as through his eyes  
Who fashioned *Thyrsis*—high midsummer's pride  
Of sun-flushed borders : dingle and loved hillside :  
Orchis fritillary cowslip : brambles dim  
Mist-garlanded—now see that landscape swim  
Into dusk ages, with the eyes of him  
Whose hand is on the bomb-switch must perceive  
Each moon new-mounted, dawn, and treacherous eve.  
Yon mountain is a seamount, his tall state  
A finger that betrays the crouching town.  
Broad fallow, level down,  
Turn traitors to our peace : the chalk-limned Horses,  
The Ancient Man, stars in their steadfast courses,  
Flash signals ! And this brook, whose waters flow  
To push the wheel and rock the mill-pond's freight  
Of sleepy lilies, beckons in the foe  
To wreck the hamlet it beguiled to rise.

VIII. *When We Dead Awakened*

i

Who is this that cometh with dyed garments from Flanders ?  
Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel ?  
And thy garments like to his that treadeth the winefats ?

“ I have trodden the winepress alone,  
And of the peoples there was none with me :  
My lifeblood is sprinkled on my garments :  
I have stained all my raiment.

“ I had had companions—comrades I had known :  
Those that stood in battle’s rages—  
Those aloof yet wished me well.  
A mist and terror fell ;  
Lover and friend were put far from me !  
He that kept my left hand,  
Sore afraid, dismayed,  
Felt heart and purpose sicken :  
Crying Peace (when there was no peace)  
Bade battle cease :  
He that kept my right hand  
Stumbled from me, stricken—  
Death was in his eyes, and on his brow  
Fear had set its brand.  
I looked, and there was none to aid ;  
And I wondered there was none to uphold.  
Therefore, when the Adversary now  
Straddled my path in power, and thought to enfold  
And would have felled me,  
My fury it upheld me  
And mine own hand wrought salvation.”

(Time will forget how much !  
 Statesmen writers and such :  
 False word : treacherous act :  
 Axis alignment pact.  
 But not forget  
 That sacrificial army plunging ever  
 Seaward, till valour saved a lost endeavour :  
 Youth falcon-poised, that spread unfearing wings,  
 As the kestrel soars and swings :  
 The little ships that came  
 To peril's furnace, swift as moths to flame :  
 The lion-mouths that flashed upon the wave.  
 And ever,  
 As the tumbled steadfast thrust of a stream,  
 Coagulate, checked ; opposed  
 And yet flowing :  
 As the dreadless host of a dream,  
 Unseeing, unknowing :  
 Hunched body, stark eyes :  
 That sacrificial army—till at last,  
 Deaf to the crowd's acclaims,  
 The crowd's cheers :  
 To the scarves' flicker blind :  
 Body and mind  
 Prostrate, oppressed,  
 Knew only the way had closed  
 In God's inn of rest.)

“ I am not sure : my eyes are yet blurred :  
My ears that have heard  
Thunder on thunders that broke  
Are as doors clashed to, where there lies behind  
One that falls drugged with dead mind.  
I am not sure : there was so much to endure :  
Day following day, the fight :  
Foot dragged on foot through the night :  
Death’s rapier lunging :  
That backward plunging !  
How should I know, whose eyes are still red  
From the chafe and the swirl and the whirl  
Of the battlesmoke ?  
I am not sure :  
But yet  
I think I am as I say :  
I am the English nation.

“ I have come from the dead.

“ I have risen as a bird that has slipped from the net.”

IX. *The Pipings of Reuben*

i

By the watercourses of Reuben there were great  
searchings of heart,  
Between the wine courses of Mayfair was speech  
that made thought start.  
From cold Olympus' cloudy top flying,  
From Tempe's vale, from haunted spring and dale,  
From trampled vine and wasted olive driven,  
His robe of oleanders rent,  
His strong oaks riven,  
Splintered and shattered  
Sycamore fence and upright poplar pale,  
The parting Genius is with crashing sent.  
Over the thrones of Gods, now empty found,  
And where the Maiden's shrine and habitation  
Looks towards Colonus and the City violet-crowned,  
Evil now flaunts its flag of domination :  
Under their crooked cross demons have taken station.  
(Unstable as water, Reuben trusted to excel :  
Weak as watered wine, Whitehall hoped 'twould all be well.)  
To the tombs and seat of Kings  
(Before Agamemnon was, these had sway)  
In hundred-citied Crete  
Death has beat a path with wings.

Michael, Prince of Persia ! Prince of Asia ! Sword of God !  
 In your Land of the Twin Rivers, by Euphrates' stream,  
 Or by Tigris, with your back to Zagros snows ?  
 Mid the scarlet windflowers of the rocks,  
 The cyclamens and tulips, wherefore sit you still ?  
 Among the sheepfolds, by the pipings of the flocks ?

West by Hermon's mountain—or by Arsuf's liliated field—  
 Gazing seaward, spear laid by, arms on shield,  
 George of Ramleh ! George of England ! wherefore wait  
 While the dragon  
 Sets his feet  
 On the greenness, on the cleanness, his obscenity  
 On the wheat ?

For the time of the pipings is finished !  
 The time of the flutings, the season of boasting and dream,  
 Is over ! Day's light is diminished :  
 Night nighs, and the skies  
 Flock flock flock, silt up silently, fill  
 With the armies of hate and of ill :  
 The halting is ended, the summer of salvation grows late.  
 Will the stars, that so long in their courses against us have  
     fought,  
 Now remember our right ?  
 As our foes mass and close,  
 Will their chariot wheels drag, and the might  
 Of the panzers be shattered ?  
 Will Nilus, that ancient River, the River of Egypt,  
 Sweep them away ?  
 Will God arise, and his enemies be scattered ?

Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute.  
 By the watercourses of Cairo, by the buried brook of Fleet,  
 By the sheepfolds, by the bleatings of the flocks,  
 Poet's lute and shepherd's flute  
 Touched the silence to elation.  
 Doubtless there was cause for jubilation !  
 Gratulation !

Doubtless all the valiant wrought  
 Ere their day went down  
 Will rank high in history's pages :  
 Doubtless through all after-ages  
 Will dispute  
 Laurel wreath and spangled crown  
 With Sedl Bahr and Anzac beaches, Suvla Bay :  
 With Ctesiphon, Sannaiyat and Es-Sinn :  
 With Gaza, Hanna, Beit Aiessa, Passchendaele :  
 Loos and Vimy, Somme and Neuve Chapelle :  
 Dunkirk, Namsos, Narvik, Andaelsnes.  
 If blood be the price of fame we have paid it in !  
 Brilliant writers :

Towering statesmen :  
 Child reciters :

History Greats men—  
 We shall live in their esteem :  
 Thinking of our sorrows, eyes will mist : women dream :  
 Grim and gay,  
 Movie magnates yet unborn will seize a theme.  
 Though a thousand years shall pass, men will say :  
 Here was valour : here was grandeur : here for every toil  
 Meet reward and guerdon : here for every man his several spoil.  
 For the soldier glory : for the newshawk was a story !

As we sat beside our wireless there was consolation :  
 There was comfort for a nation.

Will not God arise, and his enemies be scattered ?

X. *In the Wilderness*

i

In the Wilderness a Cry ! The silence stirs.  
Over smouldering kingdoms, gutted cities,  
As in the Beginning Comes the Word.  
Comfort ye my people !  
Bid them now forget !  
Only let  
The mind recall  
(Heart, remember !) how they strewed our passion's path with  
flowers,  
Chivalrous in shadow of the darkening hours,  
Hellas the forsaken !  
Hellas by the Spoiler doomed and overtaken !

“ I was from Melbourne : under Olympus cold  
They made my grave amid the heath and fern.”  
“ I was from Auckland : in the crimson brakes  
Of oleander, under Cretan Ida,  
Death struck.” “ On liliated slopes of asphodel,  
Where the green waters of Litani race  
Through myrtle copse and styrax thicket I fell,  
Far from my Ebbw Vale.” “ Far from Clydesdale,  
In the narrow seas I died.”

In the stillness, where the firs  
Range in starkness, rigid darkness ;  
By the endless reedbeds, on the reddening plain  
Where through blackening cornscape once of old the Invader  
    came,  
Beside his piled-up cart again  
The peasant thrusts fire's sickle into his ripened grain :  
Mansion minaret and hovel fall  
Tumbled in flame.  
Dnieper's strong sinews like a steed unharnessed leap,  
His plunging waters sweep  
Seaward the labouring years,  
Years that were freighted low with toil and dreams,  
Years now the driftwood of his hurrying streams !

The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light !  
 In the valley of glimmering bones close watchers have caught  
 The glitter of movement, the murmur and shudder of breath.  
 In Galilee of the Gentiles, Illinois of the Isolation :  
 In Oxford the islanded kremlin, shut in  
 Amid whisper of winds that stroke alder and willow,  
 Lapped round with harsh din  
 Of the clanking and changing of gears  
 And sleek swirling race on full throttle, smooth tyre ;  
 On the islanded upholstered mind  
 The dayspring is breaking !  
 On the cigarette ashends, *New Yorker*, teatray  
 That waits the awaking, slow yawn and drugged shaking  
 Of head that lies permed on the pillow :  
 On the clubs where they gossip and doze,  
 Where stout buttocks lounge deep  
 In caress and soft clasp of sunk chairs,  
 Under glaze of sham eyes, sham forest of antler and pelt,  
 Sham gusto of Saxon, bogus ardour of Celt :  
 Where Heavy and Light Brigades ride  
 And Dervishes rush on the maxims and squares,  
 And Buller and White  
 Or Wilson and Inglis (God knows !  
 But grand men who played well for their side !),  
 While their horses most patiently pose,  
 The dutiful dead drawn apart from their feet,  
 After Delhi or Ladysmith meet !  
 Upon those  
 Who sat in the region and shadow of death,  
 The dead places, dead faces,  
 On these has light shone !

From the wilderness that Cry !  
 As the Voice in Rama heard—desolation, lamentation,  
 Mourning of a nation  
 Gaunt in dreadless sorrow, unafraid,  
 Russia whom no friends can aid,  
 Rachel by her dead heaped high,  
 Mourning for her workers' state  
 With the autumn leaves borne down in spate :  
 From the wilderness there comes her Cry.

Now from the figtree learn  
 Her parable. When her leaf puts out and is tender  
 Ye say that the summer is nigh.  
 When a City broken asunder will not surrender,  
 When a people stricken will not die,  
 Ye know. Or do ye not know yet ?  
 In the day when the strong pillars broke,  
 The stone which your builders rejected  
 Your God has elected.  
 And the heart out of deadness awakens, the nations have heard !  
 The long winter is past !  
 For the unfulfilled thought within thought  
 Man has stood fast  
 For a dream !

XI. *In Patmos*

i

In my exile in Patmos, a slave :  
In the drift between day and dusk, when the seas  
Were a fire, when the mind was afire :  
I John saw these things :  
I saw Lucifer fall  
Shot down in flames,  
Clawed down, his wings  
Cleft by a boy—tormented and turning,  
They shredded and furled  
Till they crashed to the field  
That was bought with blood.  
In the place of mean streets  
Where rejoicing he spread  
His gaunt wings,  
Where he havocked and killed,  
His malice was stilled,  
His hurt was fulfilled.  
As lies on Thames mud  
Some bird with struck pinion,  
So he lay.  
I John saw these things.

(What isle shall receive him ? What wilderness hide,  
For covert and shield  
Till his death-wound be healed ?  
He that for foe has the world—  
The world is his grave !)

I have seen the Son of Man coming in clouds.  
Not with power and great glory,  
But certainly in clouds.  
With great tribulation,  
With desolation,  
With a tumult and clamour  
And rush of lost crowds,  
With a sound of women weeping,  
With a wind of madness and of desperation  
Clutching and sweeping  
Nation upon nation,  
With defeats, with retreats, with the flight  
From the horror by day, the terror by night,  
With hands in death's agony thrust from the wave,  
With the blast and storming of a kingdom's conflagration.

" But ah ! of our poor Thames " — *Who* never heard ?  
 Dark River ! whose wharves are pitted and scarred,  
 Whose docks are blackened and charred,  
 Whose poor homes are ravaged, whose poor lives are savaged,  
 Whose girders are twisted and hurled  
 Far inland, whose beauty is marred !  
 Christ has walked on thy tide !  
 Men shall set thee beside  
 Potomac and Jordan and Ebro—thy fame,  
 Thy name is with these !  
 Thou shalt flow through all lands !

And the Son of Man will not slouch in queues :  
 He will not be all thews,  
 Or spectre-thin and breast shrunk in :  
 He will not nudge his neighbour  
 When he sees that my hands  
 Have known what I call labour, but not labour  
 With pick and axe and spade  
 And trowel and sickle and hammer.  
 He will not touch his cap and pitch a story,  
 His knee will not be bended.  
 He will not be afraid :  
 His lips will not mutter.

I am John your brother.  
I am of your kindred and of your brethren the prophets.

I was partaker with you of the tribulation,  
I was beside you  
Through the time and times and half a time,  
The hammering and the shaping of the crime,  
The forging of the Lie,  
The days and nights of dread  
(The night of the long knives, the day of the poised sword) :  
Through the downrush of the vial  
Whence the ruthless Angel poured  
The plagues that wasted all the lands :  
In the hour of the denial  
When we warmed our palsied hands  
At the brazier in the High Priest's hall :  
I was with you through it all :  
Through the time of nation rising against nation—  
To the Morn of Resurrection from the Dead.

I am of those who in the desert knew  
The kingdom and the patience of the Lord.

I have seen the Son of Man  
Coming, not with power but certainly with glory,  
Not to his throne  
(For dominion and talk of dominion  
Are ended) :  
But in clouds :  
In death's shrouds :  
To his own.









