

1914

*Brooke, Rupert, 1887-1915*

I. Peace

Now, God be thanked Who has matched us with His hour,  
And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping,  
With hand made sure, clear eye, and sharpened power,  
To turn, as swimmers into cleanness leaping,  
Glad from a world grown old and cold and weary,  
Leave the sick hearts that honour could not move,  
And half-men, and their dirty songs and dreary,  
And all the little emptiness of love!

Oh! we, who have known shame, we have found release there,  
Where there's no ill, no grief, but sleep has mending,  
Naught broken save this body, lost but breath;  
Nothing to shake the laughing heart's long peace there  
But only agony, and that has ending;  
And the worst friend and enemy is but Death.

II. Safety

Dear! of all happy in the hour, most blest  
He who has found our hid security,  
Assured in the dark tides of the world at rest,  
And heard our word, 'Who is so safe as we?'  
We have found safety with all things undying,  
The winds, and morning, tears of men and mirth,  
The deep night, and birds singing, and clouds flying,  
And sleep, and freedom, and the autumnal earth.  
We have built a house that is not for Time's throwing.  
We have gained a peace unshaken by pain for ever.  
War knows no power. Safe shall be my going,  
Secretly armed against all death's endeavour;  
Safe though all safety's lost; safe where men fall;  
And if these poor limbs die, safest of all.

III. The Dead

Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!  
There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,

But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold  
These laid the world away; poured out the red  
Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be  
Of work and joy, and that unhopéd serene,  
That men call age; and those who would have been,  
Their sons, they gave, their immortality.

Blow, bugles, blow! They brought us, for our dearth,  
Holiness, lacked so long, and Love, and Pain.  
Honour has come back, as a king, to earth,  
And paid his subjects with a royal wage;  
And Nobleness walks in our ways again;  
And we have come into our heritage.

#### IV. The Dead

These hearts were woven of human joys and cares,  
Washed marvellously with sorrow, swift to mirth.  
The years had given them kindness. Dawn was theirs,  
And sunset, and the colours of the earth.  
These had seen movement, and heard music; known  
Slumber and waking; loved; gone proudly friended;  
Felt the quick stir of wonder; sat alone;  
Touched flowers and furs and cheeks. All this is ended.

There are waters blown by changing winds to laughter  
And lit by the rich skies, all day. And after,  
Frost, with a gesture, stays the waves that dance  
And wandering loveliness. He leaves a white  
Unbroken glory, a gathered radiance,  
A width, a shining peace, under the night.

#### V. The Soldier

If I should die, think only this of me:  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever England. There shall be  
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;  
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,  
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,  
A body of England's, breathing English air,  
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,  
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less  
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;  
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;  
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,  
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.