A Breath of Life

Wood, Clement, 1880-1950

Yes, he'll enlist — he'll leap at the chance!

If you think eleven servile hours a day, six days a week,
A slatternly wife, a tableful of children all mouths,
A sodden Sunday, and then the long round again,
Can bind him to sanity and peace —
You do not know your brother —
You do not know yourself!

Better the close-locked marching feet,
The music like great laughter, the rough comradeships —
War is a picnic, a vast game of chance;
You may win, — or earn a quick and bursting death,
Cancelling all these unpaid duty-debts at home.
Then — on to the picnic!
Out of the foul-aired routine!
A breath of life, tho death be the price!