



**MEMORIAL DE LA GRAN GUERRA  
1914-2014**

**VOICES OF THE WAR**

**RECITAL POESÍA INGLESA  
de 1914-1918**

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## 1. Isaac Rosenberg

### *On receiving News of the War: Cape Town*

Snow is a strange white word.  
No ice or frost  
Has asked of bud or bird  
For Winter's cost.  
Yet ice and frost and snow  
From earth to sky  
This Summer land doth know.  
No man knows why.  
In all men's hearts it is.  
Some spirit old  
Hath turned with malign kiss  
Our lives to mould.  
Red fangs have torn His face.  
God's blood is shed.  
He mourns from His lone place  
His children dead.  
O! ancient crimson curse!  
Corrode, consume.  
Give back this universe  
Its pristine bloom.



## 2. Rupert Brooke



### *The Soldier*

If I should die, think only this of me:  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is forever 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.

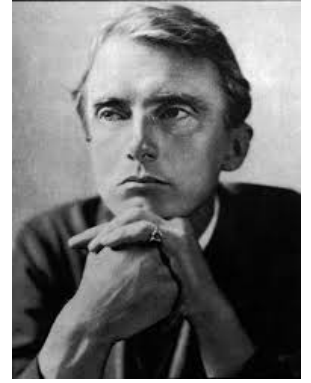
### 3. Charles Sorley



#### *When you see millions of mouthless dead*

When you see millions of the mouthless dead  
Across your dreams in pale battalions go,  
Say not soft things as other men have said,  
That you'll remember. For you need not so.  
Give them not praise. For, deaf, how should they know  
It is not curses heaped on each gashed head?  
Nor tears. Their blind eyes see not your tears flow.  
  
Nor honour. It is easy to be dead.  
Say only this, "They are dead." Then add thereto,  
"Yet many a better one has died before."  
Then, scanning all the o'ercrowded mass, should you  
Perceive one face that you loved heretofore,  
It is a spook. None wears the face you knew.  
Great death has made all his for evermore.

#### 4. Edward Thomas



##### *In Memoriam (Easter 1915)*

The flowers left thick at nightfall in the wood  
This Eastertide call into mind the men,  
Now far from home, who, with their sweethearts, should  
Have gathered them and will do never again.

#### 5. Edward Thomas

##### *The Cherry Trees*

The cherry trees bend over and are shedding,  
On the old road where all that passed are dead,  
Their petals, strewing the grass as for a wedding  
This early May morn when there is none to wed.

## 6. Mary Borden



*No, no! There is some sinister mistake*

No, no! There is some sinister mistake.  
You cannot love me now. I am no more  
A thing to touch, a pleasant thing to take  
Into ones arms. How can a man adore  
A woman with black blood upon her face,  
A cap of horror on her pallid head,  
Mirrors of madness in the sunken place  
Of eyes; hands dripping with the slimy dead?  
Go. Cover close your proud untainted brow.  
Go quickly. Leave me to the hungry lust  
Of monstrous pain. I am his mistress now –  
These are the frantic beds of his delight –  
Here I succumb to him, anew, each night.

*Handwritten draft*



## 7. Isaac Rosenberg

### *Break of Day in the Trenches*



The darkness crumbles away.  
It is the same old druid Time as ever,  
Only a live thing leaps my hand,  
A queer sardonic rat,  
As I pull the parapet's poppy  
To stick behind my ear.  
Droll rat, they would shoot you if  
they knew  
Your cosmopolitan sympathies.  
Now you have touched this English  
hand  
You will do the same to a German  
Soon, no doubt, if it be your  
pleasure  
To cross the sleeping green  
between.

It seems you inwardly grin as you pass  
Strong eyes, fine limbs, haughty  
athletes,  
Less chanced than you for life,  
Bonds to the whims of murder,  
Sprawled in the bowels of the earth,  
The torn fields of France.  
What do you see in our eyes  
At the shrieking iron and flame  
Hurled through still heavens ?  
What quaver - what heart aghast?  
Poppies whose roots are in man's veins  
Drop, and are ever dropping;  
But mine in my ear is safe -  
Just a little white with the dust.

## 8. Wilfred Owen



### *Dulce et Decorum Est*

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,  
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,  
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs  
And towards our distant rest(3) began to trudge.  
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots  
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;  
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots  
Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys! – An ecstasy of fumbling,  
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;  
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling,  
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime . . .  
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,  
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,  
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace  
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,  
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,  
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;  
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood  
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,  
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud  
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,  
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest

To children ardent for some desperate glory,  
The old Lie; *Dulce et Decorum est*  
*Pro patria mori.*

## 9. Siegfried Sassoon



### *They*

The Bishop tells us: 'When the boys come back  
'They will not be the same; for they'll have fought  
'In a just cause: they lead the last attack  
'On Anti-Christ; their comrades' blood has bought  
'New right to breed an honourable race,  
'They have challenged Death and dared him face to face.'  
'We're none of us the same!' the boys reply.  
'For George lost both his legs; and Bill's stone blind;  
'Poor Jim's shot through the lungs and like to die;  
'And Bert's gone syphilitic: you'll not find  
'A chap who's served that hasn't found some change.  
' And the Bishop said: 'The ways of God are strange!'

## 10. Vera Brittain



### *The Superfluous Woman*

Ghosts crying down the vistas of the years,  
Recalling words  
Whose echoes long have died,  
And kind moss grown  
Over the sharp and blood-bespattered stones  
Which cut our feet upon the ancient ways.

#### **But who will look for my coming?**

Long busy days where many meet and part;  
Crowded aside  
Remembered hours of hope;  
And city streets  
Grown dark and hot with eager multitudes  
Hurrying homeward whither respite waits.

#### **But who will seek me at nightfall?**

Light fading where the chimneys cut the sky;  
Footsteps that pass,  
Nor tarry at my door.  
And far away,  
Behind the row of crosses, shadows black  
Stretch out long arms before the smouldering sun.

#### **But who will give me my children?**

11. **Robert Graves**



*November 11<sup>th</sup>*

Why are they cheering and shouting  
What's all the scurry of feet  
With little boys banging on kettle and can  
Wild laughter of girls in the street?  
O those are the froth of the city  
The thoughtless and ignorant scum  
Who hang out the bunting when war is let loose  
And for victory bang on a drum  
But the boys who were killed in the battle  
Who fought with no rage and no rant  
Are peacefully sleeping on pallets of mud  
Low down with the worm and the ant

*Draft poem from a letter*

12. **Charles Sorley**



*To Germany*

You are blind like us. Your hurt no man designed,  
And no man claimed the conquest of your land.  
But gropers both through fields of thought confined  
We stumble and we do not understand.

You only saw your future bigly planned,  
And we, the tapering paths of our own mind,  
And in each other's dearest ways we stand,  
And hiss and hate. And the blind fight the blind.

When it is peace, then we may view again  
With new-won eyes each other's truer form  
And wonder. Grown more loving-kind and warm  
We'll grasp firm hands and laugh at the old pain,  
When it is peace. But until peace, the storm  
The darkness and the thunder and the rain.

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