

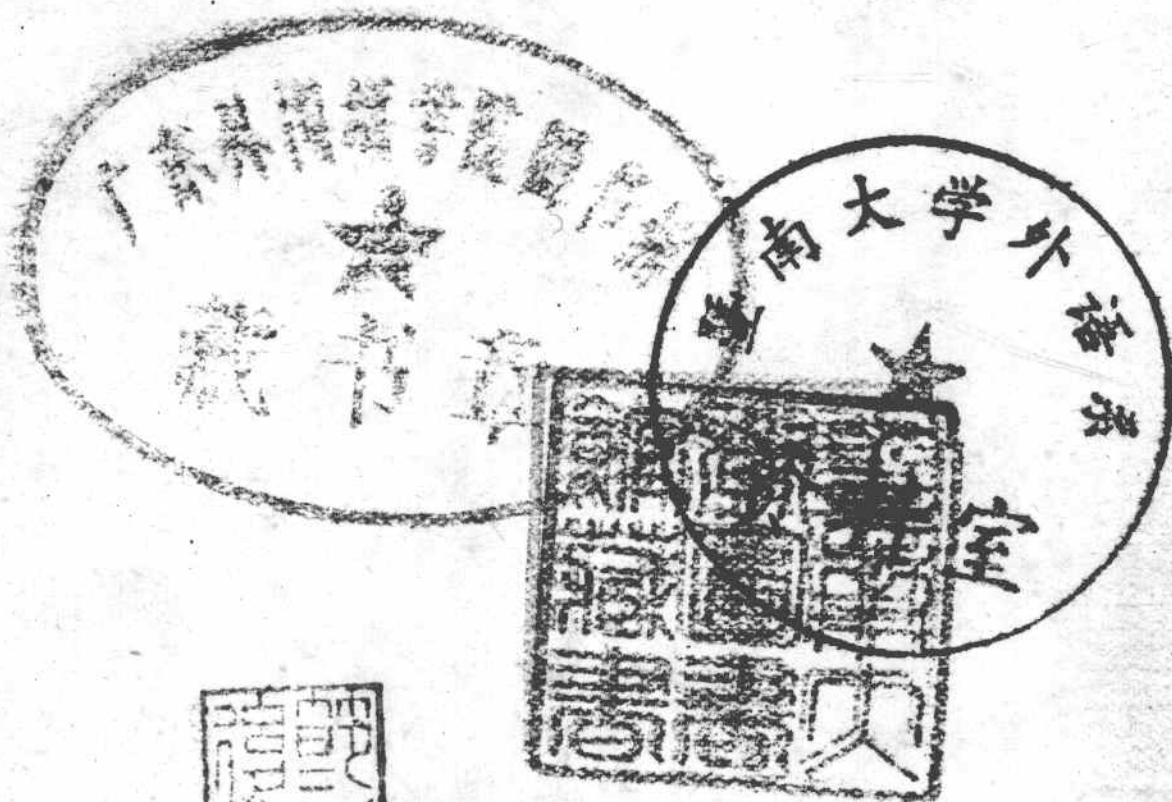
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POEMS

外文书库

BY  
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To  
MY MOTHER AND SISTERS  
AND  
To THE MEMORY  
OF MY FATHER AND BROTHER

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1917—1918





## NOCTURNE

*To Geoffrey England Taylor, 2nd Lieutenant, R.F.A.  
"Died of wounds."*

I labour in a barren place,  
Alone, self-conscious, frightened, blundering;  
Far away, stars wheeling in space,  
About my feet, earth voices whispering.

# DE CIVITATE HOMINUM

*To A.S.F.R.*

The morning sky glitters  
Winter blue.  
The earth is snow-white,  
With the gleam snow-white answers to sunlight,  
Save where shell-holes are new,  
Black spots in the whiteness—

A Matisse ensemble.

The shadows of whitened tree stumps  
Are another white.

And there are white bones.

Zillebeke Lake and Hooge,  
Ice gray, gleam differently,

Like the silver shoes of the model.

The model is our world,  
Our bitch of a world.  
Those who live between wars may not know  
But we who die between peaces  
Whether we die or not.

It is very cold  
And, what with my sensations

And my spick and span subaltern's uniform,  
I might be the famous brass monkey,  
The *nature morte* accessory.

*Morte . . . !*

'Tis still life that lives,  
Not quick life—

There are fleece-white flowers of death  
That unfold themselves prettily  
About an airman  
Who, high over Gheluvelt,  
Is taking a morning look round,  
All silk and silver  
Up in the blue.

I hear the drone of an engine  
And soft pounding puffs in the air  
As the fleece-white flowers unfold.

I cannot tell which flower he has accepted  
But suddenly there is a tremor,  
A zigzag of lines against the blue  
And he streams down  
Into the white,  
A delicate flame,  
A stroke of orange in the morning's dress.

My sergeant says, very low, "Holy God!  
'Tis a fearful death."

Holy God makes no reply  
Yet.



*1920—1930*





# THE SIX WHO WERE HANGED

The sky turns limpid green.  
The stars go silver white.  
They must be stirring in their cells now—

Unspeaking likely!

Waiting for an attack  
With death uncertain  
One said little.

For these there is no uncertainty.

The sun will come soon,  
All gold.

*'Tis you shall have the golden throne—*

It will come ere its time.  
It will not be time,  
Oh, it will not be time,  
Not for silver and gold,  
Not with green,  
Till they all have dropped home,  
Till gaol bells all have clanged,  
Till all six have been hanged.

And after?  
Will it be time?

There are two to be hanged at six o'clock,

Two others at seven,  
And the others,  
The epilogue two,  
At eight.

The sun will have risen  
And two will be hanging  
In green, white and gold,  
In a premature Easter.

The white-faced stars are silent,  
Silent the pale sky;  
Up on his iron car  
The small conqueror's robot  
Sits quiet.  
But *Hail Mary! Hail Mary!*  
They say it and say it,  
These hundreds of lamenting women and girls  
Holding Crucified Christs.

*Daughters of Jerusalem . . .*

Perhaps women have Easters.

There are very few men.  
Why am I here?

*At the hour of our death*  
At this hour of youth's death,  
*Hail Mary! Hail Mary!*  
Now young bodies swing up  
Then  
Young souls  
Slip after the stars.  
*Hail Mary! Hail Mary!*

Alas! I am not their Saint John—

Tired of sorrow,  
My sorrow, their sorrow, all sorrow,  
I go from the hanged,  
From the women,  
I go from the hanging;  
Scarcely moved by the thought of the two to  
be hanged,  
I go from the epilogue.

*Morning Star, Pray for us!*

What, these seven hundred years,  
Has Ireland had to do  
With the morning star?

And still, I too say,  
*Pray for us.*

*Mountjoy, March, 1921.*

