

Great War Triptych Texts

Spring in War-Time

(by Sara Teasdale)

I feel the spring far off, far off,
The faint, far scent of bud and leaf –
Oh, how can spring take heart to come
To a world in grief,
Deep grief?

The sun turns north, the days grow long,
Later the evening star grows bright –
How can the daylight linger on
For men to fight,
Still fight?

The grass is waking in the ground,
Soon it will rise and blow in waves –
How can it have the heart to sway
Over the graves,
New graves?

Under the boughs where lovers walked
The apple-blossoms will shed their breath –
But what of all the lovers now
Parted by Death,
Grey Death?

In Flanders Fields

(by John McCrae)

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

We Shall Keep the Faith

(by Moina Michael)

Oh! you who sleep in Flanders Fields,
Sleep sweet – to rise anew!
We caught the torch you threw
And holding high, we keep the Faith
With All who died.

We cherish, too, the poppy red
That grows on fields where valor led;
It seems to signal to the skies
That blood of heroes never dies,
But lends a lustre to the red
Of the flower that blooms above the dead
In Flanders Fields.

And now the Torch and Poppy Red
We wear in honor of our dead.
Fear not that ye have died for naught;
We'll teach the lesson that ye wrought
In Flanders Fields.

I Have a Rendezvous with Death

(by Alan Seeger)

I have a rendezvous with Death
At some disputed barricade,
When Spring comes back with rustling shade
And apple-blossoms fill the air –
I have a rendezvous with Death
When Spring brings back blue days and fair.

It may be he shall take my hand
And lead me into his dark land
And close my eyes and quench my breath –
It may be I shall pass him still.
I have a rendezvous with Death
On some scarred slope of battered hill,
When Spring comes round again this year
And the first meadow-flowers appear.

God knows 'twere better to be deep
Pillowed in silk and scented down,
Where Love throbs out in blissful sleep,
Pulse nigh to pulse, and breath to breath,
Where hushed awakenings are dear . . .
But I've a rendezvous with Death
At midnight in some flaming town,
When Spring trips north again this year,
And I to my pledged word am true,
I shall not fail that rendezvous.