

DRAFT SONG FOR VICTORY

To John Mulgan and other New Zealanders

1

UNARMED Eros, the long day's task is done

And gone you young, you brave, you best
Our land could do,
You dead at our behest.
You will be forgotten, as men are forgotten,
Time will except not you,
Death is nothing new.

True, you were our friends, but you were only men,
Lovers and sons, you were no more than men,
We shall remember you, but we are men,
And our sons will be sons of time, and when
They write your history they will not weep.
That is for us. Tears in exchange for you do not
come cheap.

2

SOMEONE had to meet the evil thing,

We sent you to meet it.
The evil thing is beaten down,
You were the flail that beat it.
You were the hand, the mind, the steel
That went about to defeat it.
We shall make speeches to greet the dubious dawn,
But you will not greet it.

3

WE have known

The safe, the waiting part,
We have known the dart
Of private fear; we have known
The hammer-blow on the heart.

4

O TERRIBLE and shattering love

Be comfortable now;
Not on the wing of fabled dove
Do you come down, but with a deep-set plough
Share through the startled body and the brain.
It is a furrow made of pain.
O desperate consuming love,
Compassionately kind
Be now; be less of hawk, more dove,
With tenderness descend upon the mind;
Be stronger love than death, O find
Some word to calm the heart.

Intolerable love, you fierce
Be mild. Wild love, now use another part.
O be content no more to tear and pierce,
Love, give us grief no longer.—
I can take you and kill you, said Love:
Death and I, which of us two is stronger?

5

OH not the wreath for you, not the magniloquent
rose,
Not the bronze laurel, not the ribbon that goes
With the large plenitude of public grief:
And not the waste words of the well-meaning orator
Will ever be our relief.

For you there is nothing, there is no word for you.
Perhaps a poetic sprig, rosemary, rue
Or pansy will signify something, perhaps the shadow
on hills
Or the gorse as it floods up ridges, or fills
The hill's hollow will give us some tame
Sign we can meditate on without over-much blame.

Men must endure

Their going hence, even as their coming hither.

Let us view therefore our hills, our bays and har-
bours,

Forest and violent rock, the still lake, the fern.
It is easy to do. The land was yours, is ours,
The land should have healing powers.
It is too easy. They are nothing. We can be stern
With ourselves. There is no new lesson to learn.
We can get on with our labours.

6

THERE is only love, there is only the mind,

There is only passionate thought,
There is beauty's terrible clarity,
There is charity
Unbought and unsought.
These are durable; you knew it; they bind
You dead and us living who die
In our time. This is no lie
For our comfort. But now
It sounds hollowly. So let the loving heart
Wait and endure again; that is its part.

—J. C. Beaglehole



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