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RUPERT BROOKE

LONDON: ERNEST BENN LTD. BOUVERIE HOUSE, FLEET STREET

The Augustan Books of Poetry Edited by Edward Thompson

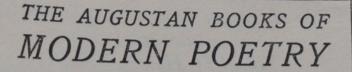
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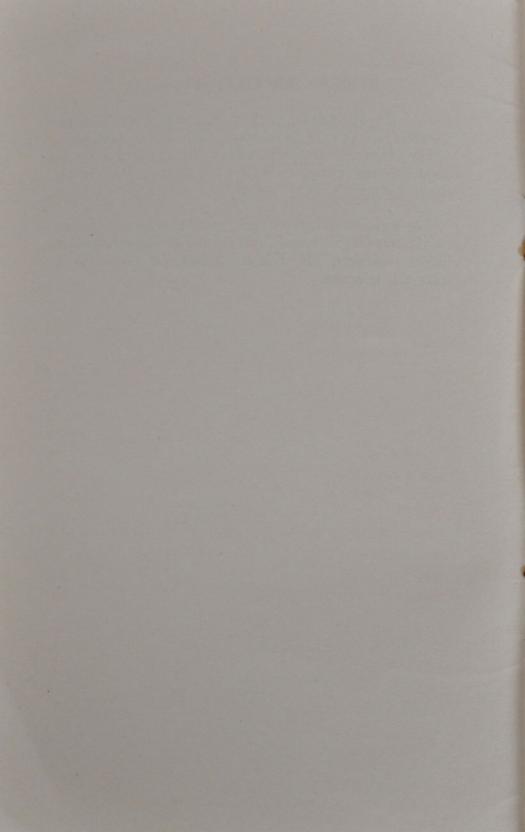
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RUPERT BROOKE, 1887-1915

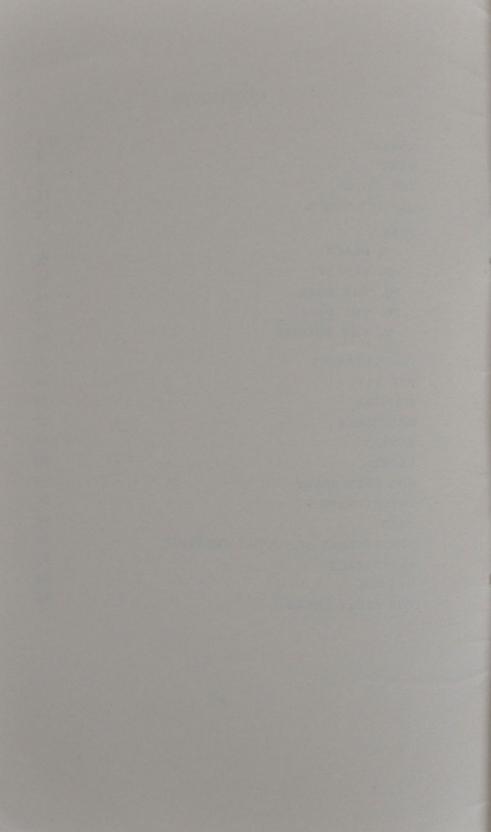
Born at Rugby, August 3, 1887; Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, 1913; Sub-Lieut., R.N.V.R., September, 1914; Antwerp, October, 1914; British Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, February 28, 1915. Died in the Ægean, April 23, 1915. Buried on Scyros.

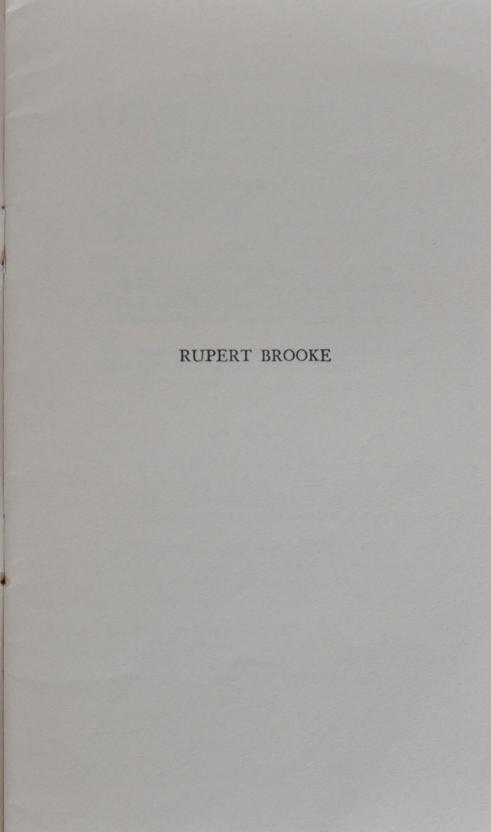
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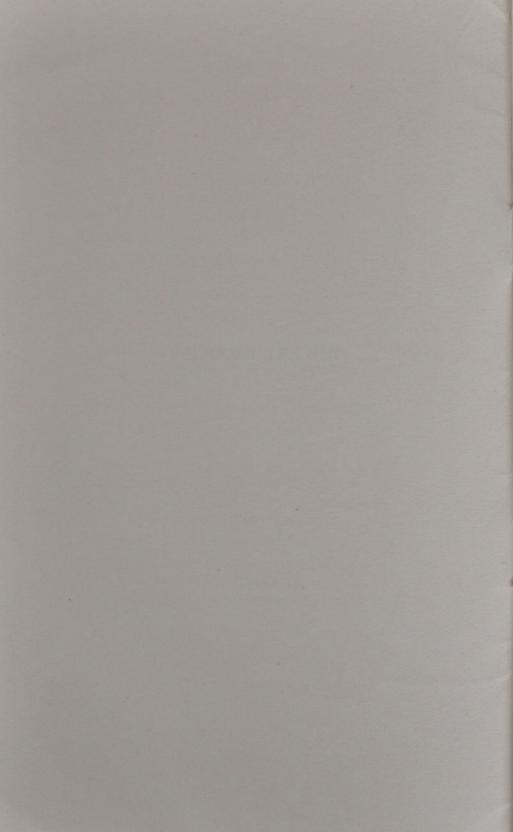


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Sonnet

Of the last land! There, waiting patiently,

One day, I think, I'll feel a cool wind blowing, See a slow light across the Stygian tide, And hear the Dead about me stir, unknowing, And tremble. And I shall know that you have died,

And watch you, a broad-browed and smiling dream,
Pass, light as ever, through the lightless host,
Quietly ponder, start, and sway, and gleam—
Most individual and bewildering ghost!—

And turn, and toss your brown delightful head Amusedly, among the ancient Dead.

Dust

WHEN the white flame in us is gone, And we that lost the world's delight Stiffen in darkness, left alone To crumble in our separate night;

When your swift hair is quiet in death,
And through the lips corruption thrust
Has stilled the labour of my breath—
When we are dust, when we are dust!—

Not dead, not undesirous yet,
Still sentient, still unsatisfied,
We'll ride the air, and shine, and flit,
Around the places where we died,

And dance as dust before the sun,
And light of foot, and unconfined,
Hurry from road to road, and run
About the errands of the wind.

And every mote, on earth or air,
Will speed and gleam, down later days,
And like a secret pilgrim fare
By eager and invisible ways,

Nor ever rest, nor ever lie,

Till, beyond thinking, out of view,
One mote of all the dust that's I

Shall meet one atom that was you.

Then in some garden hushed from wind,
Warm in a sunset's afterglow,
The lovers in the flowers will find
A sweet and strange unquiet grow

Upon the peace; and, past desiring, So high a beauty in the air, And such a light, and such a quiring, And such a radiant ecstasy there,

They'll know not if it's fire, or dew, Or out of earth, or in the height, Singing, or flame, or scent, or hue, Or two that pass, in light, to light,

Out of the garden, higher, higher. . . .

But in that instant they shall learn
The shattering ecstasy of our fire,
And the weak passionless hearts will burn

And faint in that amazing glow,
Until the darkness close above;
And they will know—poor fools, they'll
know!—
One moment, what it is to love.

The Voice

SAFE in the magic of my woods
I lay, and watched the dying light.
Faint in the pale high solitudes,
And washed with rain and veiled by night,

Silver and blue and green were showing.

And the dark woods grew darker still;

And birds were hushed; and peace was growing;

And quietness crept up the hill;

And no wind was blowing

And I knew
That this was the hour of knowing,
And the night and the woods and you
Were one together, and I should find
Soon in the silence the hidden key
Of all that had hurt and puzzled me—
Why you were you, and the night was kind,
And the woods were part of the heart of me.

And there I waited breathlessly, Alone; and slowly the holy three, The three that I loved, together grew One, in the hour of knowing, Night, and the woods, and youAnd suddenly There was an uproar in my woods,

The noise of a fool in mock distress, Crashing and laughing and blindly going, Of ignorant feet and a swishing dress, And a Voice profaning the solitudes.

The spell was broken, the key denied me And at length your flat clear voice beside me Mouthed cheerful clear flat platitudes.

You came and quacked beside me in the wood. You said, "The view from here is very good!" You said, "It's nice to be alone a bit!" And, "How the days are drawing out!" you said. You said, "The sunset's pretty, isn't it?"

By God! I wish—I wish that you were dead!

Day and Night

THROUGH my heart's palace Thoughts unnumbered throng;

And there, most quiet and, as a child, most wise, High-throned you sit, and gracious. All day long Great Hopes gold-armoured, jester Fantasies, And pilgrim Dreams, and little beggar Sighs, Bow to your benediction, go their way. And the grave jewelled courtier Memories Worship and love and tend you, all the day.

But when I sleep, and all my thoughts go straying,
When the high session of the day is ended,
And darkness comes; then, with the waning light,
By lilied maidens on your way attended,
Proud from the wonted throne, superbly swaying,
You, like a queen, pass out into the night.

1914

I. Peace

His hour,

And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping,
With hand made sure, clear eye, and sharpened power,

To turn, as swimmers into cleanness leaping,
Glad from a world grown old and cold and weary,

Leave the sick hearts that honour could not move,
And half-men, and their dirty songs and dreary,

And all the little emptiness of love!

Oh! we, who have known shame, we have found release there,
Where there's no ill, no grief, but sleep has mending,
Naught broken save this body, lost but breath;
Nothing to shake the laughing heart's long peace there
But only agony, and that has ending;
And the worst friend and enemy is but Death.

II. Safety

DEAR! of all happy in the hour, most blest He who has found our hid security, Assured in the dark tides of the world that rest, And heard our word, "Who is so safe as we?" We have found safety with all things undying,
The winds, and morning, tears of men and mirth,
The deep night, and birds singing, and clouds flying,
And sleep, and freedom, and the autumnal earth.
We have built a house that is not for Time's throwing.
We have gained a peace unshaken by pain for ever.
War knows no power. Safe shall be my going,
Secretly armed against all death's endeavour;
Safe though all safety's lost; safe where men fall;
And if these poor limbs die, safest of all.

III. The Dead

BLOW out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!
There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,
But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.
These laid the world away; poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be
Of work and joy, and that unhoped serene,
That men call age; and those who would have been,
Their sons, they gave, their immortality.

Blow, bugles, blow! They brought us, for our dearth,
Holiness, lacked so long, and Love, and Pain.
Honour has come back, as a king, to earth,
And paid his subjects with a royal wage;
And Nobleness walks in our ways again;
And we have come into our heritage.

IV. The Dead

THESE hearts were woven of human joys and cares, Washed marvellously with sorrow, swift to mirth. The years had given them kindness. Dawn was theirs, And sunset, and the colours of the earth.

These had seen movement, and heard music; known Slumber and waking; loved; gone proudly friended; Felt the quick stir of wonder; sat alone;

Touched flowers and furs and cheeks. All this is ended.

There are waters blown by changing winds to laughter And lit by the rich skies, all day. And after, Frost, with a gesture, stays the waves that dance And wandering loveliness. He leaves a white Unbroken glory, a gathered radiance, A width, a shining peace, under the night.

V. The Soldier

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

The Treasure

WHEN colour goes home into the eyes,
And lights that shine are shut again
With dancing girls and sweet birds' cries
Behind the gateways of the brain;
And that no-place which gave them birth, shall close
The rainbow and the rose:—

Still may Time hold some golden space
Where I'll unpack that scented store
Of song and flower and sky and face,
And count, and touch, and turn them o'er,
Musing upon them; as a mother, who
Has watched her children all the rich day through
Sits, quiet-handed, in the fading light,
When children sleep, ere night.

One Day

TO-DAY I have been happy. All the day
I held the memory of you, and wove
Its laughter with the dancing light o' the spray,
And sowed the sky with tiny clouds of love,
And sent you following the white waves of sea,
And crowned your head with fancies, nothing worth,
Stray buds from that old dust of misery,
Being glad with a new foolish quiet mirth.

So lightly I played with those dark memories, Just as a child, beneath the summer skies, Plays hour by hour with a strange shining stone, For which (he knows not) towns were fire of old, And love has been betrayed, and murder done, And great kings turned to a little bitter mould.

THE PACIFIC, October, 1913.

Waikiki

WARM perfumes like a breath from vine and tree Drift down the darkness. Plangent, hidden from eyes

Somewhere an eukaleli thrills and cries
And stabs with pain the night's brown savagery.
And dark scents whisper; and dim waves creep to me,
Gleam like a woman's hair, stretch out, and rise;
And new stars burn into the ancient skies,
Over the murmurous soft Hawaiian sea.

And I recall, lose, grasp, forget again,
And still remember, a tale I have heard, or known,
An empty tale, of idleness and pain,
Of two that loved—or did not love—and one
Whose perplexed heart did evil, foolishly,
A long while since, and by some other sea.

WAIKIKI, 1913.

Hauntings

IN the grey tumult of these after years
Oft silence falls; the incessant wranglers part;
And less-than-echoes of remembered tears
Hush all the loud confusion of the heart;

And a shade, through the toss'd ranks of mirth and crying Hungers, and pains, and each dull passionate mood,— Quite lost, and all but all forgot, undying, Comes back the ecstasy of your quietude.

So a poor ghost, beside his misty streams,
Is haunted by strange doubts, evasive dreams,
Hints of a pre-Lethean life, of men,
Stars, rocks, and flesh, things unintelligible,
And light on waving grass, he knows not when,
And feet that ran, but where, he cannot tell.

THE PACIFIC, 1914.

Sonnet

(Suggested by some of the Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research)

OT with vain tears, when we're beyond the sun, We'll beat on the substantial doors, nor tread Those dusty high-roads of the aimless dead Plaintive for Earth; but rather turn and run Down some close-covered by-way of the air, Some low sweet alley between wind and wind, Stoop under faint gleams, thread the shadows, find Some whispering ghost-forgotten nook, and there

Spend in pure converse our eternal day;
Think each in each, immediately wise;
Learn all we lacked before; hear, know, and say
What this tumultuous body now denies;
And feel, who have laid our groping hands away;
And see, no longer blinded by our eyes.

Clouds

DOWN the blue night the unending columns press
In noiseless tumult, break and wave and flow,
Now tread the far South, or lift rounds of snow
Up to the white moon's hidden loveliness.
Some pause in their grave wandering comradeless,
And turn with profound gesture vague and slow,
As who would pray good for the world, but know
Their benediction empty as they bless.

They say that the Dead die not, but remain

Near to the rich heirs of their grief and mirth.

I think they ride the calm mid-heaven, as these,
In wise majestic melancholy train,

And watch the moon, and the still-raging seas,
And men, coming and going on the earth.

THE PACIFIC, October, 1913.

The Busy Heart

NOW that we've done our best and worst, and parted, I would fill my mind with thoughts that will not rend.

(O heart, I do not dare go empty-hearted)
I'll think of Love in books, Love without end;
Women with child, content; and old men sleeping;
And wet strong ploughlands, scarred for certain grain;
And babes that weep, and so forget their weeping;
And the young heavens, forgetful after rain;
And evening hush, broken by homing wings;

And Song's nobility, and Wisdom holy,

That live, we dead. I would think of a thousand things, Lovely and durable, and taste them slowly, One after one, like tasting a sweet food. I have need to busy my heart with quietude.

Unfortunate

EART, you are restless as a paper scrap
That's tossed down dusty pavements by the wind;
Saying, "She is most wise, patient and kind.
Between the small hands folded in her lap
Surely a shamed head may bow down at length,
And find forgiveness where the shadows stir
About her lips, and wisdom in her strength,
Peace in her peace. Come to her, come to her!"...

She will not care. She'll smile to see me come,
So that I think all Heaven in flower to fold me.
She'll give me all I ask, kiss me and hold me,
And open wide upon that holy air
The gates of peace, and take my tiredness home,
Kinder than God. But, heart, she will not care.

Song

And Spring is here again; And the hawthorn quickens with buds of green, And my heart with buds of pain.

My heart all Winter lay so numb,
The earth so dead and frore,
That I never thought the Spring would come,
Or my heart wake any more.

But Winter's broken and earth has woken,
And the small birds cry again;
And the hawthorn hedge puts forth its buds,
And my heart puts forth its pain.

The Funeral of Youth: Threnody

THE day that Youth had died, There came to his grave-side, In decent mourning, from the country's ends, Those scatter'd friends Who had lived the boon companions of his prime, And laughed with him and sung with him and wasted, In feast and wine and many-crown'd carouse, The days and nights and dawnings of the time When Youth kept open house, Nor left untasted Aught of his high emprise and ventures dear, No quest of his unshar'd-All these, with loitering feet and sad head bar'd, Followed their old friend's bier. Folly went first, With muffled bells and coxcomb still revers'd; And after trod the bearers, hat in hand-Laughter, most hoarse, and Captain Pride with tanned And martial face all grim, and fussy Joy, Who had to catch a train, and Lust, poor, snivelling boy; These bore the dear departed. Behind them, broken-hearted, Came Grief, so noisy a widow, that all said, "Had he but wed Her elder sister Sorrow, in her stead!" And by her, trying to soothe her all the time, The fatherless children, Colour, Tune, and Rhyme

(The sweet lad Rhyme), ran all-uncomprehending. Then, at the way's sad ending, Round the raw grave they stay'd. Old Wisdom read, In mumbling tone, the Service for the Dead. There stood Romance, The furrowing tears had mark'd her rouged cheek: Poor old Conceit, his wonder unassuaged; Dead Innocency's daughter, Ignorance; And shabby, ill-dress'd Generosity; And Argument, too full of woe to speak; Passion, grown portly, something middle-aged; And Friendship—not a minute older, she; Impatience, ever taking out his watch; Faith, who was deaf, and had to lean, to catch Old Wisdom's endless drone. Beauty was there, Pale in her black; dry-eyed; she stood alone. Poor maz'd Imagination; Fancy wild; Ardour, the sunlight on his greying hair; Contentment, who had known Youth as a child And never seen him since. And Spring came too, Dancing over the tombs, and brought him flowers— She did not stay for long. And Truth, and Grace, and all the merry crew, The laughing Winds and Rivers, and lithe Hours; And Hope, the dewy-eyed; and sorrowing Song;-Yes, with much woe and mourning general, At dead Youth's funeral, Even these were met once more together, all, Who erst the fair and living Youth did know; All, except only Love. Love had died long ago.

Retrospect

N your arms was still delight, Quiet as a street at night; And thoughts of you, I do remember, Were green leaves in a darkened chamber, Were dark clouds in a moonless sky. Love, in you, went passing by, Penetrative, remote, and rare, Like a bird in the wide air, And, as the bird, it left no trace In the heaven of your face. In your stupidity I found The sweet hush after a sweet sound. All about you was the light That dims the greying end of night; Desire was the unrisen sun, Joy the day not yet begun, With tree whispering to tree, Without wind, quietly. Wisdom slept within your hair, And Long-Suffering was there, And, in the flowing of your dress, Undiscerning Tenderness. And when you thought, it seemed to me, Infinitely, and like a sea, About the slight world you had known Your vast unconsciousness was thrown. .

O haven without wave or tide!
Silence, in which all songs have died!
Holy book, where hearts are still!
And home at length under the hill!
O mother quiet, breasts of peace,
Where love itself would faint and cease!
O infinite deep I never knew,
I would come back, come back to you,

Find you as a pool unstirred, Kneel down by you, and never a word, Lay my head, and nothing said, In your hands, ungarlanded; And a long watch you would keep; And I should sleep, and I should sleep!

MATAIEA, January, 1914.

Heaven

FISH (fly-replete, in depth of June, Dawdling away their wat'ry noon) Ponder deep wisdom, dark or clear, Each secret fishy hope or fear. Fish say, they have their Stream and Pond; But is there anything Beyond? This life cannot be All, they swear, For how unpleasant, if it were! One may not doubt that, somehow, Good Shall come of Water and of Mud; And, sure, the reverent eye must see A Purpose in Liquidity. We darkly know, by Faith we cry, The future is not Wholly Dry. Mud unto mud!-Death eddies near-Not here the appointed End, not here! But somewhere, beyond Space and Time, Is wetter water, slimier slime! And there (they trust) there swimmeth One Who swam ere rivers were begun, Immense, of fishy form and mind, Squamous, omnipotent, and kind; And under that Almighty Fin, The littlest fish may enter in.

Oh! never fly conceals a hook,
Fish say, in the Eternal Brook,
But more than mundane weeds are there,
And mud, celestially fair;
Fat caterpillars drift around,
And Paradisal grubs are found;
Unfading moths, immortal flies,
And the worm that never dies.
And in that Heaven of all their wish,
There shall be no more land, say fish.

The Great Lover

HAVE been so great a lover: filled my days So proudly with the splendour of Love's praise, The pain, the calm, and the astonishment, Desire illimitable, and still content, And all dear names men use, to cheat despair, For the perplexed and viewless streams that bear Our hearts at random down the dark of life. Now, ere the unthinking silence on that strife Steals down, I would cheat drowsy Death so far, My night shall be remembered for a star That outshone all the suns of all men's days. Shall I not crown them with immortal praise Whom I have loved, who have given me, dared with me High secrets, and in darkness knelt to see The inenarrable godhead of delight? Love is a flame;—we have beaconed the world's night. A city: —and we have built it, these and I. An emperor: -we have taught the world to die. So, for their sakes I loved, ere I go hence, And the high cause of Love's magnificence, And to keep loyalties young, I'll write those names Golden for ever, eagles, crying flames,

And set them as a banner, that men may know,
To dare the generations, burn, and blow
Out on the wind of Time, shining and streaming . . .
These I have loved:

White plates and cups, clean-gleaming, Ringed with blue lines; and feathery, faery dust; Wet roofs, beneath the lamp-light; the strong crust Of friendly bread; and many-tasting food; Rainbows; and the blue bitter smoke of wood; And radiant raindrops couching in cool flowers; And flowers themselves, that sway through sunny hours, Dreaming of moths that drink them under the moon; Then, the cool kindliness of sheets, that soon Smooth away trouble; and the rough male kiss Of blankets; grainy wood; live hair that is Shining and free; blue-massing clouds; the keen Unpassioned beauty of a great machine; The benison of hot water; furs to touch; The good smell of old clothes; and other such-The comfortable smell of friendly fingers, Hair's fragrance, and the musty reek that lingers About dead leaves and last year's ferns. .

Dear names.

And thousand other throng to me! Royal flames;
Sweet water's dimpling laugh from tap or spring;
Holes in the ground; and voices that do sing;
Voices in laughter, too; and body's pain,
Soon turned to peace; and the deep-panting train;
Firm sands; the little dulling edge of foam
That browns and dwindles as the wave goes home;
And washen stones, gay for an hour; the cold
Graveness of iron; moist black earthen mould;
Sleep; and high places; footprints in the dew;
And oaks; and brown horse-chestnuts, glossy-new;
And new-peeled sticks; and shining pools on grass;
All these have been my loves. And these shall pass,
Whatever passes not, in the great hour,

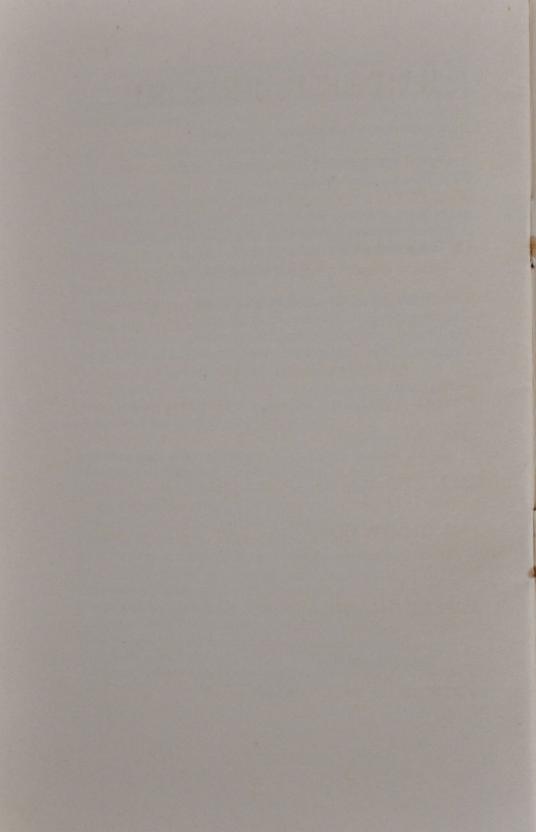
Nor all my passion, all my prayers, have power
To hold them with me through the gate of Death.
They'll play deserter, turn with the traitor breath,
Break the high bond we made, and sell Love's trust
And sacramented covenant to the dust.
—Oh, never a doubt but, somewhere, I shall wake,
And give what's left of love again, and make
New friends, now strangers.

But the best I've known, Stays here, and changes, breaks, grows old, is blown About the winds of the world, and fades from brains Of living men, and dies.

Nothing remains.

O dear my loves, O faithless, once again This one last gift I give: that after men Shall know, and later lovers, far-removed, Praise you, "All these were lovely"; say, "He loved."

MATAIEA, 1914.



RUPERT BROOKE

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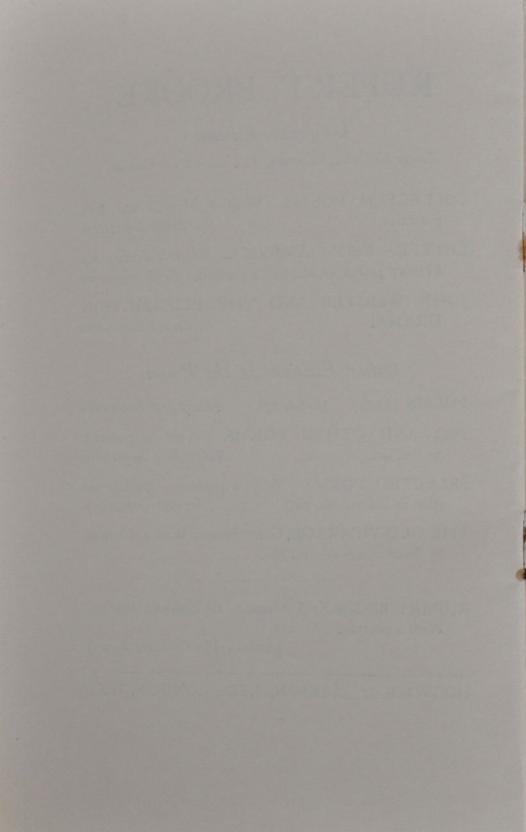
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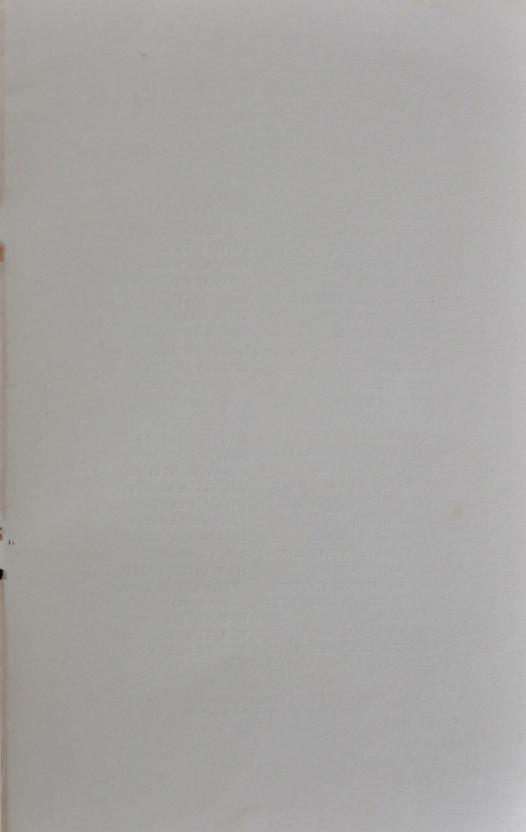
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