

**RUPERT
BROOKE**

SELECTED
POEMS

Rupert Brooke
Selected Poems

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Selected Poems

Day that I have Loved

Tenderly, day that I have loved, I close your eyes,
And smooth your quiet brow, and fold your thin dead hands.
The grey veils of the half-light deepen; colour dies.
I bear you, a light burden, to the shrouded sands,

Where lies your waiting boat, by wreaths of the sea's making
Mist-garlanded, with all grey weeds of the water crowned.
There you'll be laid, past fear of sleep or hope of waking;
And over the unmoving sea, without a sound,

Faint hands will row you outward, out beyond our sight,
Us with stretched arms and empty eyes on the far-gleaming
And marble sand...
Beyond the shifting cold twilight,
Further than laughter goes, or tears, further than dreaming,
There'll be no port, no dawn-lit islands! But the drear

Waste darkening, and, at length, flame ultimate on the deep.
Oh, the last fire – and you, unloved, unfriended there!
Oh, the lone way's red ending, and we not there to weep!
(We found you pale and quiet, and strangely crowned with flowers,

Lovely and secret as a child. You came with us,
Came happily, hand in hand with the young dancing hours,
High on the downs at dawn!) Void now and tenebrous,
The grey sands curve before me...

From the inland meadows,
Fragrant of June and clover, floats the dark and fills
The hollow sea's dead face with little creeping shadows,
And the white silence brims the hollow of the hills.

Close in the nest is folded every weary wing,
Hushed all the joyful voices, and we, who held you dear,
Eastward we turn and homeward, alone, remembering...
Day that I loved, day that I loved, the Night is here!

On the Death of Smet-Smet, the Hippopotamus-Goddess

SONG OF A TRIBE OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS

(The Priests within the Temple)

She was wrinkled and huge and hideous?
She was our Mother.
She was lustful and lewd? – but a God; we had none other.
In the day She was hidden and dumb, but at nightfall moaned in the shade;
We shuddered and gave Her Her will in the darkness; we were afraid.

(The People without)

She sent us pain,
And we bowed before Her;
She smiled again
And bade us adore Her.
She solaced our woe
And soothed our sighing;
And what shall we do
Now God is dying?

(The Priests within)

She was hungry and ate our children; – how should we stay Her?
She took our young men and our maidens; – ours to obey Her.
We were loathed and mocked and reviled of all nations; that was our pride.
She fed us, protected us, loved us, and killed us; now She has died.

(The People without)

She was so strong;
But Death is stronger.
She ruled us long;

But Time is longer.
She solaced our woe
And soothed our sighing;
And what shall we do
Now God is dying?

Second Best

Here in the dark, O heart;
Alone with the enduring Earth, and Night,
And Silence, and the warm strange smell of clover;
Clear-visioned, though it break you; far apart
From the dead best, the dear and old delight;
Throw down your dreams of immortality,
O faithful, O foolish lover!

Here's peace for you, and surety; here the one
Wisdom – the truth! – "All day the good glad sun
Showers love and labour on you, wine and song;
The greenwood laughs, the wind blows, all day long
Till night." And night ends all things.
Then shall be
No lamp relumed in heaven, no voices crying,
Or changing lights, or dreams and forms that hover!
(And, heart, for all your sighing,
That gladness and those tears are over...)

And has the truth brought no new hope at all,
Heart, that you're weeping yet for Paradise?
Do they still whisper, the old weary cries?
*"Mid youth and song, feasting and carnival,
Through laughter, through the roses, as of old
Comes Death, on shadowy and relentless feet,
Death, unappeasable by prayer or gold;
Death is the end, the end!"*
Proud, then, clear-eyed and laughing, go to greet
Death as a friend!
Exile of immortality, strongly wise,
Strain through the dark with undesirous eyes
To what may lie beyond it. Sets your star,
O heart, for ever! Yet, behind the night,
Waits for the great unborn, somewhere afar,
Some white tremendous daybreak. And the light,
Returning, shall give back the golden hours,
Ocean a windless level, Earth a lawn
Spacious and full of sunlit dancing-places,
And laughter, and music, and, among the flowers,
The gay child-hearts of men, and the child-faces
O heart, in the great dawn!

The Hill

Breathless, we flung us on the windy hill,
Laughed in the sun, and kissed the lovely grass.
You said, "Through glory and ecstasy we pass;
Wind, sun, and earth remain, the birds sing still,
When we are old, are old..." "And when we die
All's over that is ours; and life burns on
Through other lovers, other lips," said I,
– "Heart of my heart, our heaven is now, is won!"

"We are Earth's best, that learnt her lesson here.
Life is our cry. We have kept the faith!" we said;
"We shall go down with unreluctant tread
Rose-crowned into the darkness!" ... Proud we were,
And laughed, that had such brave true things to say.
– And then you suddenly cried, and turned away.

Sonnet

Oh! Death will find me, long before I tire
Of watching you; and swing me suddenly
Into the shade and loneliness and mire
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.

Song

"Oh! Love," they said, "is King of Kings,
And Triumph is his crown.
Earth fades in flame before his wings,
And Sun and Moon bow down." —
But that, I knew, would never do;
And Heaven is all too high.
So whenever I meet a Queen, I said,
I will not catch her eye.

"Oh! Love," they said, and "Love," they said,

"The gift of Love is this;
A crown of thorns about thy head,
And vinegar to thy kiss!" —
But Tragedy is not for me;
And I'm content to be gay.
So whenever I spied a Tragic Lady,
I went another way.

And so I never feared to see
You wander down the street,
Or come across the fields to me
On ordinary feet.
For what they'd never told me of,
And what I never knew,
It was that all the time, my love,
Love would be merely you.

Kindliness

When love has changed to kindliness —
Oh, love, our hungry lips, that press
So tight that Time's an old god's dream
Nodding in heaven, and whisper stuff
Seven million years were not enough
To think on after, make it seem
Less than the breath of children playing,
A blasphemy scarce worth the saying,
A sorry jest, "When love has grown
To kindliness – to kindliness!" ...
And yet – the best that either's known
Will change, and wither, and be less,
At last, than comfort, or its own
Remembrance. And when some caress
Tendered in habit (once a flame
All heaven sang out to) wakes the shame
Unworded, in the steady eyes
We'll have, —*that* day, what shall we do?
Being so noble, kill the two
Who've reached their second-best? Being wise,
Break cleanly off, and get away,
Follow down other windier skies
New lures, alone? Or shall we stay,
Since this is all we've known, content
In the lean twilight of such day,
And not remember, not lament?
That time when all is over, and
Hand never flinches, brushing hand;
And blood lies quiet, for all you're near;
And it's but spoken words we hear,
Where trumpets sang; when the mere skies
Are stranger and nobler than your eyes;
And flesh is flesh, was flame before;
And infinite hungers leap no more
In the chance swaying of your dress;
And love has changed to kindliness.

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 you —

And 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!

Menelaus and Helen

I

Hot through Troy's ruin Menelaus broke
To Priam's palace, sword in hand, to sate
On that adulterous whore a ten years' hate
And a king's honour. Through red death, and smoke,
And cries, and then by quieter ways he strode,
Till the still innermost chamber fronted him.
He swung his sword, and crashed into the dim
Luxurious bower, flaming like a god.

High sat white Helen, lonely and serene.
He had not remembered that she was so fair,
And that her neck curved down in such a way;
And he felt tired. He flung the sword away,
And kissed her feet, and knelt before her there,
The perfect Knight before the perfect Queen.

II

So far the poet. How should he behold
That journey home, the long connubial years?
He does not tell you how white Helen bears
Child on legitimate child, becomes a scold,
Haggard with virtue. Menelaus bold
Waxed garrulous, and sacked a hundred Troys
'Twixt noon and supper. And her golden voice
Got shrill as he grew deafer. And both were old.

Often he wonders why on earth he went
Troyward, or why poor Paris ever came.
Oft she weeps, gummy-eyed and impotent;
Her dry shanks twitch at Paris' mumbled name.
So Menelaus nagged; and Helen cried;
And Paris slept on by Scamander side.

The Jolly Company

The stars, a jolly company,
I envied, straying late and lonely;
And cried upon their revelry:
"O white companionship! You only
In love, in faith unbroken dwell,
Friends radiant and inseparable!"

Light-heart and glad they seemed to me
And merry comrades (even so
*God out of Heaven may laugh to see
The happy crowds; and never know
That in his lone obscure distress*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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