



# NOVEMBER 11, 1918: THE POEMS OF BERTRAM JOHN WILLIAM ANDREWS

*Posted on November 1, 2018 by N. Dass*



✖ *In commemoration of the end of the First World War, one hundred years ago, we present a series of poems only recovered in 2015. They are written by Bertram John William Andrews, who died of his wounds on July 31st, 1917 in the Third Battle of Ypres. He was twenty-two years of age. The poems, unpublished, were left with Annie Knox, a girl that Bertram was courting. It was the niece of Annie who found the poems in 2015. There are many famous poets of World War I - but the few verses that Andrews left behind, presented here, also possess a delicacy and fineness of thought that is rare.]*

## **Bertram John William Andrews (1895 - 1917)**

### **Love and War**

A while ago in London town,  
I watched the crowds come trooping down  
And mark'd the people passing by,  
(Such hosts of people passing by)  
All speeding on so pensively.  
Oblivious of my stare.  
Yet all the time I was aware  
That one had gone who should be there,  
Thus, searching in my memory,  
I could not think who it should be  
Till, happily,

I saw a soldier home from France  
"Tis he", I thought, "That merry glance!  
"Tis Cupid who, his bow and dart  
"For bomb and bayonet laid apart,  
"No longer wars on human heart  
"But wages warfare new.  
"Yet that," I ponder'd," can't be true.  
"The land has lovers still a few.  
"Who then can Cupid's place supply,

"Since still his arrows seem to fly  
"unerringly?"

Anon a maiden chanc'd to pass,  
A bright and winsome, laughing lass;  
Who, as she went, provokingly  
Enslav'd mankind and dext'rously  
Contrived, their hearts should captive be  
To her whom next they view'd.  
Now Cupid fights, his ancient feud  
Is by his sister still pursued:  
But deadlier her artillery  
(His bow and quiver idle lie),  
Her roguish eye.

*Plumstead*  
*August 1916*

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## **At Eventide**

The scented zephyr whispers down the hill.  
The trees droop low to catch his message sweet.  
Rippling, it flows from bough to bough until  
It tells me, murmuring softly and discreet.  
My love is nigh – and all my pulses fill  
With longing: while the summer beauties fleet  
Unseen, unmarked, before my eyes that strain  
For that first glimpse of her whose magic  
Stirs my brain.

The summer takes a fresher sweetness now  
The flow'rets bloom in colours yet more fair  
And those caressing breezes softer flow  
And add more radiant perfume to the air.  
Enchanted, Nature's beauties brighter glow.  
She dons a magic loveliness more rare.

My love is nigh – the earth becomes more bright,  
And learns to show more lovely in my  
loved one's sight.

The brazen sun his boldness finds too gay,  
Confronted with that beauty: and apace  
Red and asham'd, he hastes to flee away:  
And earth, relieved, still finds a newer grace  
When he is gone. And in the twilight grey  
Ethereal shines that perfect wistful face.  
With benediction stars awake high above  
And all my heart goes out in strong  
Abiding love.

In passion's colours, scarlet, purple, mauve.  
The sun expires: and silver floods the land  
All virginal and pure the moonbeams rove  
And line with light the earth on ev'ry hand.  
There, where the fierce descending Phoebus strove  
With Dian's onrush, now a stately band  
White, fleecy clouds, float through the steel-blue sky  
On earth is peace, and in my soul, for Love is nigh.

The nestling villages in silence sleep  
The little rivers murmur quietly.  
Athwart the moonlit hills the shadows creep  
And all the night seems full of mystery.  
It's silences my inmost fibres steep  
And lull my spirit to an ecstasy.  
Cathedral-like the stillness broods, and rest  
Sentient of Love, lies like a garment on Earth's breast.

*Gailes*  
*July 1916*

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## Dreams

I dreamed I was a warrior whose cuirass  
Shining in splendour paled Apollo's light.  
Massive my shield and fierce it's polish'd brass  
And terrible my helmet's nodding height.  
Within my sword dwelt Slaughter and pale Fright  
Ran o'er the lands, submerged neath sable pall,  
For with my reeking triumph fell bleak night  
And death. Yet all this had I left, to fall  
Vanquished before thy feet and own myself thy thrall

And yet again I dreamed: that Music's pow'rs  
Intoxicating, from my fingers flow,  
While nations wondered and the woodland flow'd  
Entranc'd , in still more perfect beauty glow'd.  
At times my strains like shrieking tunes rode  
Upon the tempest's height: at times they fell  
With sigh as soft as snow; yet ever strode  
As victors o'er men's natures. But their spell  
To thee could not express what all my  
Heart would tell.

At last the radiance of pure happiness  
Poured on my soul. I dreamed a perfect dream  
And Love fulfill'd my life with loveliness  
And hid in glory that faint, pallid gleam  
Of War's long stress and Music's pulsing stream.  
"To be thy lover." Such soft harmony  
Lies in those words, which sweeter sounding seem  
Than all the magic strains of Faëry.  
Ah! loved one, grant it may no more be dream to me.

*Gailes*  
*July 1916*

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## Memories

Some mem'ries cling as the heart grows old  
Of happy days in the long ago:  
And thoughts drift back, sweet thoughts of gold  
None else can know

The passionate scent of your windswept hair,  
The charm of your slow-waking smile  
Those fathomless eyes of mischief rare;  
Still will beguile.

And it may be years will pass away,  
And Life wan dim and Death draw nigh;  
That glorious dream of a sweet June day  
Will never die.

*Turnberry*  
*Midsummer 1916*

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## The Ship of Dreams

A vessel sails the midnight air  
Merrily, merrily,  
With merchandise of treasures rare  
In purple majesty.  
Bright dreams are all its costly freight  
And to the port of souls it glides  
To charm, where care was, and make glad.  
Its choicest wares make strong the sad.  
In stormy souls serene it rides  
To give respite where sorrow rode.  
Ah! Shining argosy!

That ship casts anchor oft, where I,  
My soul in stark dismay  
From days dark torment, restless lie:

And lulls that torment's sway.  
From foreign sea and distant land  
Float dreams, surpassing Ophir's waves,  
The day's chief beauties and delight,  
The mystic wonders of the night,  
The chiefest wealth that vessel bears,  
More rich than gems of Samarkand  
Or pearls from the Cathay.

*Ash Rifle Range*

*5/9/16*

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## Explanations

That aged one, who still the fire  
Of headstrong youth retains:  
Who kindles ev'rywhere desire  
And binds all men in chains:  
Who sometimes hard and cruel would seem  
Who makes and shatters many a dream:  
For him, harsh master many a ream  
I've spoil'd and lost my pains  
Poor wight!

Each eve old Love comes sailing down  
To wake my slumb'ring lyre.  
And, for a while, without a frown  
With verse he will inspire.  
Then, when I think I'm going strong,  
He hides his face and all goes wrong.  
I'm stranded, so's my lovely song.  
Love smiles and I retire.  
Good night!

*Gailes*

*July 1916*

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## Epilogue

Thus has this little book an end:  
But, friend,  
If you should read its lines and them condemn:  
Pray stay your judgment while I crave  
Your patience. Though I sing a strain  
Of Sentiment, remember once again  
It is the best so dull a knave  
As I can sing. And if I dare  
Exhort you to refrain awhile:  
Has one verse pleas'd you, made you smile?  
A little then I pay to Ayr,  
Which pleasant town I in my heart do bless  
For pleasant folk and three month's happiness

So I retire. I make my bow  
Right now  
If anyone to jeer still dares  
Who cares?

15 August 1916

*[Second Lieutenant Bertram J.W. Andrews, Royal Sussex Regiment, 13th Battalion (the South Downs), is buried in Dozinghem Military Cemetery, in Belgium].*

***These poems are provided through the courtesy of [Discover War Poets](#).***

***The [photo](#) shows, "Mud Road to Passchendaele," by Douglas W. Culham, painted in 1917.***

