

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

Posted on November 1, 2018 by N. Dass





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

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 ashamed, 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

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*

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*

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

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

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

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.

