



Some Desperate Glory: The First World War the Poets Knew

Max Egremont

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The story of World War I, through the lives and words of its poets

The hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of what many believed would be the war to end all wars is in 2014. And while World War I devastated Europe, it inspired profound poetry—words in which the atmosphere and landscape of battle are evoked perhaps more vividly than anywhere else.

The poets—many of whom were killed—show not only the war's tragedy but also the hopes and disappointments of a generation of men. In *Some Desperate Glory*, the historian and biographer Max Egremont gives us a transfiguring look at the life and work of this assemblage of poets. Wilfred Owen with his flaring genius; the intense, compassionate Siegfried Sassoon; the composer Ivor Gurney; Robert Graves, who would later spurn his war poems; the nature-loving Edward Thomas; the glamorous Fabian Socialist Rupert Brooke; and the shell-shocked Robert Nichols—all fought in the war, and their poetry is a bold act of creativity in the face of unprecedented destruction.

Some Desperate Glory includes a chronological anthology of the poets' works, telling the story of the war not only through the lives of these writers but also through their art. This unique volume unites the poetry and the history of the war—so often treated separately—granting readers the pride, strife, and sorrow of the individual soldier's experience coupled with a panoramic view of the war's toll on an entire nation.

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