

WHOM THE GODS LOVE

"The Flower of England perished in this War"

I

Shall we then downcast fare with mournful eyes,
Wear veils of Cyprus, swathe ourselves in black,
Because those high-hearted Venturers came not back
To homely solace, from their great emprise?
Shall we, made small by sorrow, send regret
To dog their radiant course, who now are sped
On errands of immortality and fled
Beyond our finitude of toil and fret?

Shall we not rather, knowing them so far
From all that racks us, - safe from grief and time's
Intolerable familiarities
With the shuddering flesh and spirit - like a star
Of gladness set their memory that sublimes
All sorrow, in our night of agonies.

II

For could they choose, be sure they'd not return!
Nor love, nor fame could lure them who have known
The ravishment of the spirit gladly blown
By winds of perilous purpose to the bourne
Of wild, exultant, ultimate escape,
From beggaring Life, and Death's largesse have taken,
In glory of youth, in splendour of wills unshaken,
These rode down time and left Odd Age a-gape.

Think you they would come back, they who have wrung
The honey and gall from life in one great hour?
Who have been given the Freedom of God's City?
Triumphant be their dirge who were the flower
Of mourning England - Shame them not with pity.
Whom the Gods love die young! - die young! - die young!

Amelie Rives

(Princess Troubetzkoy)

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