

A HIGHLAND REGIMENT
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LT. SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS

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To
THE OFFICERS AND MEN
OF THE 5TH SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS
AND ESPECIALLY TO
MAJOR A. L. MACMILLAN
WHO IS AND WILL BE
TO ME AS TO ALL THE REST
THE MAJOR FOR EVER

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THE WAITING WIFE

OUT on the hillside the wild birds crying,
A little low wind and the white clouds flying,
A little low wind from the southward blowing,
What should I know of its coming and going ?

Over the battle the shrapnel crying
A tune of lament for the dead and the dying,
And a little low wind that is moaning and weeping
For the mouths that are cold and the brave hearts sleeping.

I and my man were happy together
In the summer days and the warm June weather—
What is the end of our laughter and singing ?
A little low wind from the southward winging.

The hearth is cold and my house is lonely,
And nothing for me but waiting only,
Feet round the house that come into it never,
And a voice in the wind that is silent for ever.

GOLSPIE, 1915

CHRIST IN FLANDERS

OH, you that took our sin and pain .
Upon your shoulders long ago,
Are you come back to earth again,
About the battle do you go ?
By trenches where with bitter cries
Men's spirits leave their tortured clay,
Oh, wanderer with the mournful eyes,
Are you on Flanders soil to-day ?

The battle fog is wreathed and curled
Before us, that we cannot see
The darkness of the newer world
As your eternal agony,
The gallant hearts, the bitter blood,
The pains of them that have not died,
A bright light in the eyes of God
And a sharp spear-point in his side.

Church Parade, 1915

IN MEMORIAM

PRIVATE D. SUTHERLAND KILLED IN ACTION IN THE
GERMAN TRENCH, MAY 16, 1916, AND THE OTHERS
WHO DIED.

SO you were David's father,
And he was your only son,
And the new-cut peats are rotting
And the work is left undone,
Because of an old man weeping,
Just an old man in pain,
For David, his son David,
That will not come again.

Oh, the letters he wrote you,
And I can see them still,
Not a word of the fighting
But just the sheep on the hill
And how you should get the crops in
Ere the year got stormier,

And the Bosches have got his body,
And I was his officer.

You were only David's father,
But I had fifty sons
When we went up in the evening
Under the arch of the guns,
And we came back at twilight—
O God! I heard them call
To me for help and pity
That could not help at all.

Oh, never will I forget you,
My men that trusted me,
More my sons than your fathers',
For they could only see
The little helpless babies
And the young men in their pride.
They could not see you dying,
And hold you while you died.

Happy and young and gallant,
They saw their first-born go,

But not the strong limbs broken
And the beautiful men brought low,
The piteous writhing bodies,
The screamed, "Don't leave me, Sir,"
For they were only your fathers
But I was your officer.

A CREED

OUT of the womb of time and dust of the years forgotten,
Spirit and fire enclosed in mutable flesh and bone,
Came by a road unknown the thing that is me for ever,
The lonely soul of a man that stands by itself alone.

This is the right of my race, the heritage won by my fathers,
Theirs by the years of fighting, theirs by the price they paid,
Making a son like them, careless of hell or heaven,
A man that can look in the face of the gods and be not afraid.

Poor and weak is my strength and I cannot war against heaven,
Strong, too strong are the gods ; but there is one thing that
I can
Claim like a man unshamed, the full reward of my virtues,
Pay like a man the price for the sins I sinned as a man.

Now is the time of trial, the end of the years of fighting,
And the echoing gates roll back on the country I cannot see,
If it be life that waits I shall live for ever unconquered,
If death I shall die at last strong in my pride and free.

VIMY RIDGE, 1916