

Reality in War Literature

Henry Williamson

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A motorcar slowing down ~~suddenly~~ ^{in the lane} outside my window ~~the type~~ ^{on the asphalt} ~~in front Avenue, there,~~ ~~made a~~
made a downward droning sound, and in an instant the sunlight
or my horse was put out, and I was leading a horse
through in deep sucking mud, helpless and hopelessly
in a slough of shell-holes. ~~but pulling the reins of a mule lying on its side with mud & dead weight of~~
~~beast against it, the ground was broken & scored with the soft mud, and many~~
~~holes were scored by~~
~~the white reflected streaks~~
~~falling upwards and~~
~~arising in a vast~~
~~fire-flames in a semicircle, # and~~
~~wavering~~
~~and~~
~~shadows of the~~
~~beautiful and~~
~~till the soft~~
~~ghostly flames the turbulent fire and everlasting flames.~~
~~To~~
~~avoid the shelled track tacks track the side road~~
~~led the file of pack-mules a "short cut" across~~
~~the~~
~~to the mounds i took the beast~~
~~while the mud dashed jessal silver behind~~
~~and groaned, while the mud dashed jessal silver behind~~
~~its ears.~~
~~fire-nines burst into a deadly rain~~
~~bullets, smoke~~
~~glass tank and shattering crash around us, tanks, #~~
~~shattered moaned and piped overhead.~~
~~rockets shot off~~
~~gashings and with half a hundred weight of mud #~~
~~note and sweating and~~
~~the soft downward slurring sound, another, and~~
~~another, and another, and another.~~
~~respirator, at the alert position~~
~~i could hardly~~
~~will mud; i could hardly~~
~~see my arms.~~
~~started screaming to my mother, and then~~
~~a long time afterwards (it seemed) i was shining my~~
~~electric torch~~

Somewhere near I heard a noisy commotion curving in high amongst saplings & acacias, ~~explosion~~
~~under bushes~~
~~under a tree trunk~~
~~when~~
~~it was exploded~~
~~in mud. The horses~~
~~were led with the~~
~~wanted~~
~~men, who had long afterwards,~~

(head and) tangled and twisted with stalks of his water-hemp crop, (2)
on his legs, twisted and broken under the weight of a red jacket. Then
I went west along the coast road, and saw a mule
carrying a load of coals. Then a small
mule, and I said, "Drive forth and into
the sea, and most

the slough. Nothing at all, as life in the Salient went; an ordinary incident in our lives the next day of the army

for footless transport. Afterwards these 8-hour journeys seem almost cushy, compared with life the ~~atmosphere~~

front line of outposts during Third Ypres.

No noise of ~~the~~ a motorcar's engine slowing down = ~~the~~ in our front Avenue roadway in this year of peace nineteen twenty six

but at the sunlight for a millionth part of second; I admit that I encourage the visitation of old scenes & life, is

that I encourage the sunlight, being an agent of life, is

the haunting with the back again;

often stronger than the light darkness in the last time. Yet I have

nights and fresh bright darkness in the after afternoon summer sunshine

set for hours in the Mote Hole in Nott Devon, from a boy's catapult)

on Rockham beach = pebbles at a round rise

shooting small irregular pebbles, at hearing them chromatic boulders, for the psychic pleasure of falling with the to

whizzing and whining of spent bullets. And when it was time to

swim and throw seaweed at my friends against it

the wave-line, I knew that he too was back in deep

from me, and I knew

crying fit, and

despair night-



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at one small θ)

~~wood~~ Smoke from a wood fire, and I am
back again in the German dugouts ~~now~~ alone
in the Trace Valley, with smarting eyes. ~~The doorway~~ ~~the~~ ~~doorway~~ ~~the~~
~~Summer we have a chatty school, and~~ ~~a fire of~~ ~~the wood desk~~
visions that return at the smell of ~~and~~ ~~the wood desk~~
~~wood~~ deal planks or boxes would fill a hundred
~~hugs;~~ ~~the~~ ~~time~~ ~~the~~ ~~be written~~ ~~in~~ ~~these~~
~~these~~ ~~one day~~ ~~on day~~ ~~the~~ ~~written~~, and then perishes
~~there~~ ~~the short will~~ ~~have~~ no more. Unless {
~~there~~ ~~the~~ ~~short will~~ ~~have~~ no more. Unless {
then another ~~generation~~ ~~of~~ ~~Wharton~~ ~~generation~~ has arisen
and goes to their ~~forefathers~~ fathers.

Sometimes, ~~lock is with that I can~~
~~but very occasionally, I find a lock that I can not~~
~~myself away with, both locking the door of my~~
~~writing room, cursing (that old silent habit) when my gentle~~
~~wife comes to say it is time for tea, or supper, or~~
~~bed, and that it will me so tired again,~~
~~no use, a dead fire, two or three in the morning again,~~
~~empty and grey.~~

Way of Revelation Got me that way; and berates it
was as well that it ~~it~~ Cept. Evans' ~~lock was not provided~~
~~published in its original length, which was three times~~
~~of the published volume. Or it might have been better, for the~~
~~two-thirds was to readers, that we used have had~~
~~rejected~~ ~~copied it to the top war ad~~
~~to name. The publisher~~
~~Please, let it~~ ~~contain~~ ~~needed no~~
~~companion, as was probably its reception by the~~
~~critics, who did not need to take~~
~~groom for an attitude~~
~~when reviewing it, but~~

earthen
the scrub
of the
uncles
set,

Endy. "Front got led".

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wrote, naturally out of their excitations. And these emotions, being reflected back again upon poor Ernest, who in his ~~own~~, war-winded state said

~~that~~ all just support

his own, ~~support~~ added was brought on his collapse. Yes, darkness gets back again if it can, in many ways.

How many people, who care for the real stuff (as opposed to the emotionalism of people who want the overblown into verse and prose about heroes, sacred emblems, the scales of justice, etc etc) have read Mr Patrick Miller's The Natural Man? It may be out of print now; it suggests that it is time it was reprinted. After disappointed and artificial displays like the film Mars and Ypres, to which ~~nothing~~ ~~was~~ possible, it would be the story of nearly every man and war book will be bought and read and flockled in millions, it is surely indicated that the ^{the ordinary man} war has yet to be written - I mean the ^{to my mind} detailed description of the world's militarised man in Europe. Every one was somebody's son.

To return to the Natural Man. It is true; it is well written. ~~It has~~ ^{the} blemish, ~~the~~ ^{to my mind} detailed description of the prostitute during Paris leave is too incident of the prostitute during Paris leave is too detailed and prolonged. The war scenes and incidents, the characters of Crump, Saxon, Blavon, Chard, and other ^{are so interesting that the best} characters of the 18-19th century are so interesting that the best opinion of the interruption So, if my be answered, did ^{always!} one resents the natural man who enjoyed (apparently always!) Blavon, the natural man who enjoyed (apparently always!) the War. As the sturdy work; I wish Mr Miller would ~~re~~ revise the next edition and add further scenes that would fill in some of the

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disability gabs where he breaks off a carefully built up scene during its most interesting moments. It had technique to do this. Deceitful shots - Go on, don't stop; and but vain.

Let me quote, from The Natural Man, the (descript.) the ~~Dialect~~, ^{before the} in the summer of '19'7, before the battles of last year:

Page 118 - 119, no.

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Trubshaw may possibly have read the three War Books
by Mr. R. H. Mottram - Re Spanish Farm, Sixty Days March now!,
and The Crime at Vandenberg. Re first is the best;
the second looks like the blackest writer to
easy - a Sunday afternoon, after roast beef and Yorkshire
pudding - that typical middle-class Sunday afternoon that
Mr. Mottram has so well individualized ^{in fact} in recent
years. Re books are interesting,
printed slant ^{long} & ^{big} & ^{big} comfort; the battle scenes, are ~~facto~~
but they say with comfort; they want do.
They feel feeble. Perhaps they are very many. But Mr.
H. Mr. Tomlinson has said that have come out
Mottram book, or books, are the finest that have come out
of the War. This was always must be small. War comes hardest
Mr. Tomlinson!

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during the war - that is, one ~~for~~ ^{of} ~~these~~ a group whose first consideration was to unite in a certain way. We were at war; the people must be heartened, etc. The ordinary war correspondent considered him; he could not "see plain"; he wrote often in an emotional state, and ⁱⁿ the result usually coincided with what millions of readers read at home with what millions of readers read of the universe. Every thought the the ultimate truth of the universe, in varying degrees; ~~country~~ action in the war being black, in varying degrees; and sometimes I am filled with a black and bitter dread that those always of thinking (or assimilating ~~from~~) from newshawks) will ^{merely} bring on another War... that the ~~ghosts~~ are Mr. Tolstoi was not the ordinary war correspondent. He has the gift of natural seeing. Let me quote from his book Waiting for Daylight, from the long essay called The Nobodies. It has the spirit that is rare, and all come as a revelation to many terrible who do not know Mr. Tolstoi's work.

Page 118 — 121.

[I come now to three books by Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer, he would call himself. He Ford was well known, English writer. He is set in ~~in~~ that both as well known, ^{as} he is set in ~~in~~ that been into a long time, and to irritate some people. He peculiarities which seem to irritate some people. His talk, as it were, with his good reason and clarity;

(writing and)

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and suddenly the middle of a beautifully presented
 scene, he ~~was~~^{had} to work and spit, and we ~~had~~^{had} to leave
 it and tell us another story about a ~~new~~^{new} language. My
 wife Sylvia Reitgers. It's good to be ~~old~~^{old} (that)
 called ~~old~~^{old}. ~~old~~^{old} am one of
 (B) ~~the~~^{is} original calculations seen ~~supposefully~~^{truly} life-like; but they echo
 back ~~for~~^{for} the reader now. This is the old man was referred as a child.

The books are fragments of a long novel. They are called,
 in order of remembrance, Some do Not ("Some rest on Snowy Borders, Some
 do not"), No more Parades, and A Man Could Stand
up. The ~~two~~ first must be read, for itself, and
 for the ~~one~~^{one} better comprehension of No more Parades,
 which is a magnificent description of an Infantry
 Base Depot in France before the ~~Breakthrough~~^{of} the
 March breakthrough in 1918. I imagine the story &

Captain Titjens and his wife Sylvia ~~had~~^{had} a son
 was intended as counterpoint to the war scenes; he
 sustains the other in my memory. Yet I need
 No more Parades for its descriptions; it's clear and

written ~~presentments~~^{recreation} of old scenes. I know
 that base-camp. Mr Ford does not share my memory
 of it. He can unit.

A man could the third book. I can't make out of
 mind about the third book. It is made of at least
 three great instantaneous fragments. It is a
 fragment ~~describes~~^{describes} re-creation of a trench,
 somewhere north of a hill,

Kennel Hill,

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(part) umbra pte.)

in April 1948. Re German drive ~~the tank~~ is
and ~~the rest is expected~~ imminent, and is expected
over; ~~and~~ ~~the rest is expected~~ ~~Minister~~ { minute
to take Baileul. ~~Seas~~ ~~Second~~ ~~Minute~~ { minute
the British scene is built up. ~~that at~~ ~~9A~~ has a tremendous
power of presentation to the reader. Admits a
Pink gravel trenches. (Perhaps there were some, or
~~the~~ ~~the road~~ ~~there~~ ~~or was~~, gravel trenches in that
county) a certain piece by ~~any~~ ~~is then~~ ~~the~~ ~~at sunrise,~~
is what of the trenches & probably no ~~are~~ ~~long~~ ~~the~~ ~~long~~
~~just~~ ~~but more~~ ~~left~~ ~~at~~ ~~most~~ ~~just~~ ~~on~~
(Page 107 et seq.)

I have an evening July) already a writer of elderly talent who
~~and old soldier~~ ~~in the Buffs during the war~~
Mr Ford, ~~who was~~ in the Buffs during the war,
was raised during the war as a soldier in the Buffs, ~~so~~
he perpetuated a colossal falsehood ~~the soldiers took~~ and
this trend dragging. But it may, it is not based on
an activity of experience. (But why should it be? asked an
unconscious) actually; it is, in Conrad's phrase,
true but imaginary. You, butlets I am ~~but~~ quibbling, having
as an authority, owing ^{to} ~~the book~~ the remote & sketchy story of that
Concent ^{as} ^{I read it.} It is fine; the characters
are original, the incidents are fresh and
remain in the memory even the

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~~at least~~ ~~with~~ ~~profound~~ described & sandwiched
prepared for ~~the~~ ~~old~~ Captain (a.k.a Major) Tatjer
~~in the~~ ~~now~~ ~~in the~~ ~~classical~~ ~~now~~
in the trenches. Rabbits ~~are~~ ~~in the~~ bears at the
described is the classical manner, and bears at the
& well-known fact that man is an imitative creature.
What a meal! How magnificently done! ^(needs) a ~~feature~~ the
voice of Hostess my self well eschew. Yet the 3rd intended
deliberately intended it the ~~and~~ ~~done in the people~~ ~~manner of~~ ~~classic meals.~~
~~but it may especially~~

Page 206.

~~I would like to see a picture from the books, but to the half forgotten~~
~~is a picture of a boy (and I am fairly sure he was white boy, as it~~
~~is not be contrasted; any good wife does~~
~~well)~~
~~but contrast by example, and contrast to habits,~~
~~but~~
~~it's Adams and unproductive; and I suppose as first~~
~~partly it will make a good, the part both of the~~
~~with life a contrast~~
~~which are social & contrast and then its effect on the mind~~
~~which are social & contrast and then its effect on the mind~~
~~show the condition man~~
~~as well.~~

The poems of Rupert Brooke, and
familiar to especially the war
sonnets, are familiar to

may people; but how may know the work
of Wilfrid Owen? ~~This is~~ Due
did not write very much, at least, in published verse ~~now~~
he is still & that volume of down
he is plain volume of ~~the~~ ~~the~~, and I believe it will be
the year ~~1918~~ ~~1919~~, and I believe it will be
known when mud horse day ware, under raised, is forgotten. It is

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of the stuff of greatness — the spirit I
Every man ~~in the world~~ ^{I will speak for} all that I
want, ~~to say~~ ^{regards} regard for men things, to be
~~to say about Owen~~ feel impelled to say in my
regards ~~for~~ ^{the} his worth and the spirit that shine in it,
but also, ~~now~~, of time and space, and ~~the~~ ^{the} time & all
this article runs on. Perhaps = another time & all
be enabled to write a page on Alfred Owen,
who was killed in the last months of the war ~~before~~
invalided for wounds earlier on, he "wangled" his
way back to the men of his old infantry
company. Was there any left after Third of Feb?
that ^{is} to greet him? He had written of
one widow ~~his~~ ^{the woman} called Greater Love
than, in

Red lips are not so red
kindred of the English dead.
As the stained glass windows
Kindness of wood and love pure.
Seems plants their love love
O love, your eyes blushed in my stand!
When I beheld eyes —

Your slender attributes
treasures not exquisite like lilies knife - skewed,

Killy words true
the good seems not to care, bear
Till the price love by death extreme despatchite.

Crooks her — death extreme lost,
Your voice rings not so soft, —

your dear voice is not dear,
gentle, and always clear,
To them whom none nor near
Now earth has stopped their pillow mouth but crying.

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Heart, you are never hot,
Nor large, nor full like hearts made great with plots;
And though ^{you} have handle hole,
Polar are all the while to ail
Your cross things flame and hail;
Weep, you may weep, for you may load them not.

And one word like ^{to say the truth in the present time, when} Shelley "Postscript,"
Francis Thompson wrote of hearts in the song called ^{team, and} ~~Rose,~~ ^{but never a}
~~postscript!~~ But ~~not to Rose,~~ ^{and} weeps large-sized ^{team,}
~~Rose,~~ and carves beautiful inscription ---
goes to Rose, and goes to all the team.
Give me if I have misjudged you, but I ^{in books} ~~and~~ the sound, and a
forgive me if I have glad with ~~not~~ ^{and} ~~your~~ ^{memory} movedly ~~the road below~~
~~falling phosphorescent~~ ^{are in Devon, made by the} ~~gentle - flying surfaces in the road below~~
~~motor car~~ ^{gas slate,} ~~gas slate,~~ ^{and} ~~your~~ ^{memory} movedly ~~the road below~~.

H. Williamson.

12/12/26