To S.A.

I loved you, so I drew these tides of men into my hands
    and wrote my will across the sky in stars
To earn you Freedom, the seven-pillared worthy house,
    that your eyes might be shining for me
        When we came.

Death seemed my servant on the road, till we were near
    and saw you waiting:
When you smiled, and in sorrowful envy he outran me
    and took you apart:
        Into his quietness.

Love, the way-weary, groped to your body, our brief wage
    ours for the moment
Before earth's soft hand explored your shape, and the blind
    worms grew fat upon
        Your substance.

Men prayed me that I set our work, the inviolate house,
    as a memory of you.
But for fit monument I shattered it, unfinished: and now
The little things creep out to patch themselves hovels
    in the marred shadow
        Of your gift.
Mr Geoffrey Dawson persuaded All Souls College to give me leisure, in 1919-20, to write about the Arab Revolt. Sir Herbert Baker let me live and work in his Westminster houses.

The book so written passed in 1921 into proof: where it was fortunate in the friends who criticized it. Particularly it owes its thanks to Mr and Mrs Bernard Shaw for countless suggestions of great value and diversity: and for all the present semi-colons.

It does not pretend to be impartial. I was fighting for my hand, upon my own midden. Please take it as a personal narrative pieced out of memory. I could not make proper notes: indeed it would have been a breach of my duty to the Arabs if I had picked such flowers while they fought. My superior officers, Wilson, Joyce, Dawnay, Newcombe, and Davenport, could each tell a like tale. The same is true of Sterling, Young, Lloyd, and Maynard: of Buxton and Winterton: of Ross, Stent, and Siddons: of Peake, Hornby, Scott-Higgins, and Garland: of Wordie, Bennett, and MacIndoe: of Bassett, Scott, Goslett, Wood, and Gray: of Hinde, Spence, and Bright: of Brodie and Pascoe, Gilman and Grisenthwaite, Greenhill, Dowsett, and Wade: of Henderson, Leeson, Makins, and Nunan.

And there were many other leaders or lonely fighters to whom this self-regardant picture is not fair. It is still less fair, of course, like all war-stories, to the unnamed rank and file, who miss their share of credit, as they must do, until they can write the despatches.

T. E. S.

Cranwell, 15 August 1922