

'1914

He went without fears, went gaily, since go he
must,
And drilled and sweated and sang, and rode in the
heat and dust
Of the summer ; his fellows were round him, as
eager as he,
While over the world the gloomy days of the
war dragged heavily.

He fell without a murmur in the noise of battle ;
found rest
'Midst the roar of hooves on the grass, a bullet
struck through his breast.
Perhaps he drowsily lay ; for him alone it was
still,
And the blood ran out of his body, it had taken so
little to kill.

So many thousands lay round him, it would need
a poet, maybe,
Or a woman, or one of his kindred, to remember
that none were as he ;
It would need the mother he followed, or the girl
he went beside
When he walked the paths of summer in the flush
of his gladness and pride,

To know that he was not a unit, a pawn whose
place can be filled ;
Not blood, but the beautiful years of his coming
life have been spilled,
The days that should have followed, a house and
a home, maybe,
For a thousand may love and marry and nest, but
so shall not he.

When the fires are alight in the meadow, the stars
in the sky,
And the young moon drives its cattle, the clouds
graze silently,
When the cowherds answer each other and their
horns sound loud and clear,
A thousand will hear them, but he, who alone
understood, will not hear.

His pale poor body is weak, his heart is still, and a
dream
His longing, his hope, his sadness. He dies, his

full years seem
Drooping palely around, they pass with his breath
Softly, as dreams have an end-it is not a violent
death.

My days and the world's pass dully, our times are
ill ;
For men with labour are born, and men, without
wishing it, kill.
Shadow and sunshine, twist a crown of thorns for
my head !
Mourn, O my sisters ! singly, for a hundred
thousand dead.'

1914 by F. Békássy

Békássy, F. (1925), *Adriatica and other poems*, London : Leonard & Virginia Woolf
at the Hogarth Press