

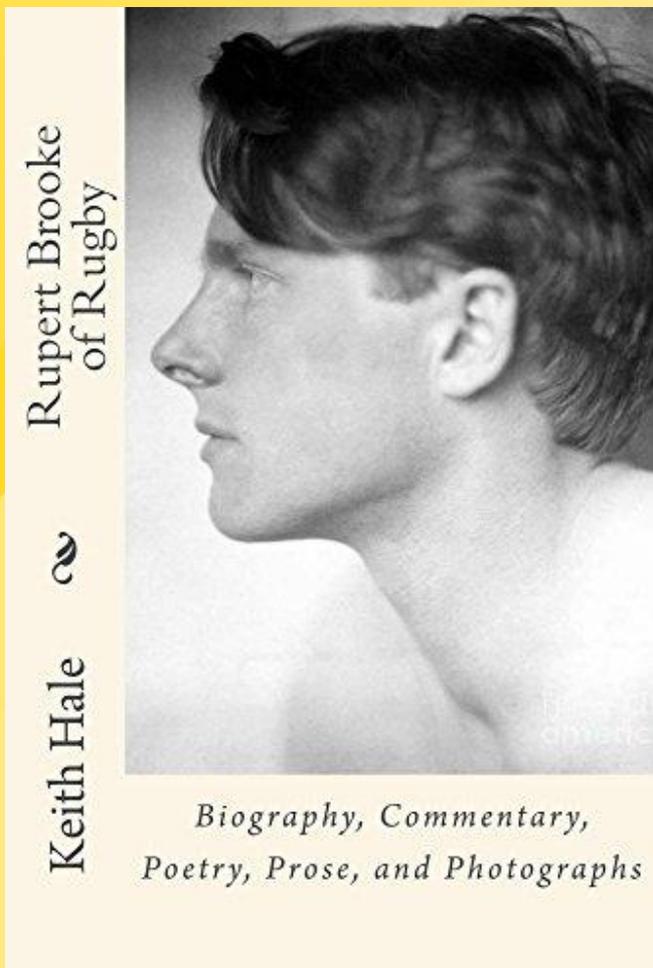


# The Soldier

By Rupert Brooke



# Rupert Brooke (1887 -1915)



- Studied classics at Cambridge.
- Joined Bloomsbury group of writers.
- Enlisted in August 1914 (navy).
- Developed pneumococcal sepsis from an infected mosquito bite.
- Died 23 April 1915. (Skyros)



# The Soldier (1914)

- If I should die, think only this of me:
  - That there's some corner of a foreign field
  - That is for ever England. There shall be
  - In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
- A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
- Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam;
- A body of England's, breathing English air,
- Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.
  
- And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
  - A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
- Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
- Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
- And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
- In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.



## What kind of poem is it?

- Patriotic poem
- Originally titled «The Recruit»
- Written in 1914, before the public is made aware of the carnage in trenches



## What knowledge of warfare did Brooke have?

- None
- He witnessed the evacuation of Antwerp only.
- Sensitive man rather than a battle-hardened war veteran.



# What is it About?

- A young man who is about to go to war.
- This is what he thought the war experience would be like.
- Encourages young British man to fight and die for the glorification of the country.
- Used as recruiting poem.



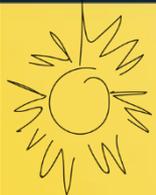
*If I should die, think only this of me:  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever England.*

- The poet muses over the possibility of dying while at war.
- Wherever he dies, that place will be England forever.

- **WHY?**

- His corpse will rot into the earth there and because he is English that place is claimed as England by him.





....*There shall be  
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;*

- When he dies on that piece of land, a richer part will be within in.
- *Why the piece of land in which he dies is going to be superior?*
- Because he is an **Englishman**.
- His corpse will fertilize, make the land fruitful, improve the piece of land he has died on.
- His English corpse is superior to the corpse of anybody else
- Corpse = fertilizer



*A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,  
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam;*

- His body grew breathing English air.
- Biblical connotation . Adam made out of dust.
- Dust=biblical allusions
- “*From dust you come to dust you will return*”
- Ways to roam:
  1. He had the roads of England to walk around.
  2. The English ways which made the person who he actually is.



*A body of England's, breathing English air,  
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.*

- Suns of home
- **Why plural?**
- Suns of the other nations of the empire
- **Suns = sons**
- Sons of England, blessed by the people they grew around.
- England is blessed by the sons of England and he is one of them
- Washed by the rivers = baptized/pure



*And think, this heart, all evil shed away,  
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less*

- Heart is a synecdoche= a part which represents a whole  
heart = I
- All evil shed away = I am a very good person, there is no  
evil in my heart
- **OR**
- I kill evil people
- The eternal mind = god
- A pulse which lasts forever
- Hence: I have no evil in my heart and I work for a higher  
power



*Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;  
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;  
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,  
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven*

- I give back to other people what England gave to me.

1. Sights of England
2. Sounds of England
3. Happy dreams
4. Laughter
5. Gentleness



**Englishness**

- *Where are those hearts at peace under an English Heaven?*
- Civilizing mission which brings Englishness to the other countries of the Empire.





## Love Sonnet



- Petrarchan sonnet (8+6)
- Iambic pentameter 10 syllable line with 5 alternate stresses
- Iambic pentameter= heartbeat (respond to our mother's heartbeat)
- Love sonnet to England.
- England as a wonderful place and he sees no wrong in it
- Sonnet to recruit young soldiers read out in Westminster Abbey by Winston Churchill.

