

# Over the Whole Wood: Robert Graves and the Significance of David Thomas

*Anne Marsh Penton*

Walking through trees to cool my heat and pain,  
I know that David's with me here again.

(Robert Graves, 'Not Dead')

*David Cuthbert Thomas was my grand-uncle, and while I try in the pages that follow to present a dispassionate view of the personal and literary effect he had on Robert Graves, I make no pretence at treating the subject from a purely literary or literary-critical point of view; my focus is on what Thomas meant, emotionally and psychologically, to Graves.*

*Thomas's life is notoriously under-documented, but there are certain details of his circumstances and character that have come down to us through oral testimony, principally of his mother Ethelinda Thomas, via her grandson, my father David Lloyd.*

Having enlisted in the Army when war was declared in August 1914, Robert Graves found himself sent to France in May 1915, at the age of nineteen. Here, six months later, he was to meet the older poet Siegfried Sassoon, together with his close friend and fellow-Second Lieutenant David Cuthbert Thomas, the same age as Graves; all three were serving in the same regiment, the Royal Welch Fusiliers. Thomas had left Christ College, Brecon, a week before the outbreak of the war; there he had written some poetry, and edited the school magazine, *The Breconian*. Bound for Oxford that autumn, his intention had been to read 'Greats', and then to train for the priesthood; this choice of vocation he had apparently made as young as eleven. Sassoon and Thomas had met at the Litherland army training depôt near Liverpool, in May 1915. Their meeting with Graves was to signal the start of a remarkable, but tragically short-lived, three-way friendship; they



David Cuthbert Thomas (1895-1916)

quickly became inseparable (as far as was possible on active service), remaining so until Thomas's death from a sniper's bullet in March 1916.

Although markedly different in personality, both Graves and Sassoon, by implicit admission in their later accounts of the war, and at different stages of their friendship, were to fall deeply and idealistically 'in love' with (the assumed to be heterosexual) Thomas. In the short time that he and Graves and Sassoon were together, Thomas seems to have earned the confidence and appreciation of both his companions, his non-judgmental and sympathetic nature perhaps reminding Graves of one of his cherished former school friends, Raymond Rodakowski, whom he describes warmly in *Good-bye to All That*.<sup>1</sup> In the time-honoured English Public-School tradition, Graves, Sassoon and Thomas felt sufficiently at ease together to devise nicknames for each other. To Sassoon, Thomas had become 'Tommy' since their first meeting at Litherland, in both speech and writing: a gesture Thomas was to return with affection by naming Sassoon 'Sassons'. Graves, known usually as 'Robert', occasionally as 'Roberto' – according to a correspondence he had with Edward Marsh in August 1916 – later used Thomas's nickname for Sassoon.<sup>2</sup> He sometimes also addressed Thomas, or referred to him in letters, as Tommy, but in his writings intended for publication always referred to him, familiarly, as David. Graves even named his eldest son, David Nicholson Graves (1920-1943), in Thomas's memory.

An affinity with literature, especially with poetry was to become a central focus for all three men, with classical literature further cementing Thomas's common interests with Graves, and equestrian activities and cricket those with Sassoon. With his easy-going nature, as has been noted both by Graves and Sassoon, as well as from family sources, Thomas would have found himself acting as a mediator between the two poets at times. Sassoon tells us that he gave Thomas his poems to review, with Thomas

subsequently making notes in his own notebook, now missing. It is likely that Graves paid Thomas the same compliment, as it is known that he and Sassoon exchanged poems with each other. While Richard Perceval Graves has noted that Graves and Sassoon were equally close to Thomas, Graves seems to have written less about him than Sassoon.<sup>3</sup> Sassoon's feelings for Thomas tended toward adoration and adulation, and later, desolation, whereas Graves's seem more diffuse, more guarded perhaps. What there is consists of a few observations scattered throughout *Good-bye to All That*, and two poems: 'Goliath and David', which carries a dedication to Thomas, and 'Not Dead', which names him directly. Both of these poems are included in the collection *Goliath and David*, published in 1917.<sup>4</sup> The grief-stricken 'Lost Love' published in 1919, may have been a generalised reflection of Graves's own grief occasioned by Thomas's death.

Sue Curtis makes a similar observation of Graves's seemingly 'veiled' adoration for Thomas, Writing her programme notes for *The Cool Web: a Robert Graves Oratorio*, in 2014 (consisting of Graves's poems set to music by the composer Jools Scott), she notes that both had been profoundly affected by David's death, but that Graves had been less obviously so.

To date, little has been written about Thomas's influence on Graves's life and work. Paul Fussell reminds us that Graves borrowed Thomas's forename for the poem 'Goliath and David', but then curiously he refers to Thomas as 'Sassoon's friend'.<sup>5</sup> In his biography of Graves, Martin Seymour-Smith notes that he entered into friendship with the two poets *after* they had gotten to know each other, but neglects to add that Sassoon and Thomas had forged a close friendship over many months by the time they met Graves in France.<sup>6</sup> In her biography of Graves, Miranda Seymour briefly mentions Thomas, but only to claim that his death "jarred Sassoon into the bitter vein" that ultimately made

him famous.<sup>7</sup> Adrian Caesar describes Thomas's effect on Sassoon, but says little about his relationship with Graves.<sup>8</sup>

The ring-fence of silence erected by Thomas's immediate family around his association with Graves and Sassoon has been partly to blame for the lack of information about their friendships.<sup>9</sup> The horror of the First World War cast long shadows over all those who survived, as well as their families. Most were generally reluctant to talk about the immediate past, preferring instead to move forward and rebuild scarred and shattered lives. The Thomases felt this way. According to his daughter, Irene, David's clergyman father kept his stoical council, unsure what to make of his son's involvement with Graves and Sassoon, which he read about in Thomas's letters (now lost and presumed destroyed).

Graves's two poems explicitly about Thomas are in complete contrast with one another. Graves was relieved to have seen 'Goliath and David' published, as if it were some kind of strange compensation for Thomas's death.<sup>10</sup> Like Wilfred Owen's 'Parable of the Old Man and the Young' (1918), it generalizes the death of Thomas to illustrate a larger truth, but it does not communicate Thomas's psychological presence or Graves's personal feelings for him, in sharp contrast to 'Not Dead', which R.P. Graves commends as a 'moving tribute to David Thomas', a view widely held.<sup>11</sup>

It is also widely held that Graves's sense of David's presence persists throughout the poem.<sup>12</sup> One can, however, go further and say the poem is actually *about* him – as Graves says to Marsh in April 1916: "'Not Dead" I wrote in France about poor David Thomas'.<sup>13</sup> Virtually every one of the images in the poem's eleven lines warmly and enthusiastically conveys what are known to have been Thomas's personal characteristics. The poem lists and brings to life the qualities Graves admired in his friend.

Fussell has called 'Not Dead' Graves's 'sensuous little ode'.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps more than anything else written by the poet at the time, it affords the reader a glimpse into the psyche of the young, sexually

awakening Graves. It forms the concluding poem to *Goliath and David*, and in many ways defines this whole collection. A slim volume which seems to disappear from view when tucked into any bookshelf, its physical slightness belies the power of the ten poems, arising predominantly from the war-time camaraderie of Sassoon, Graves and Thomas. Anne Mounic has suggested that Graves's childhood fears were associated with the colour red, and with the idea that 'poetry is born on the threshold of death'.<sup>15</sup> Her insight might lead one to wonder whether the book's carmine cover was chosen deliberately to recall the colour of drying blood.

In 'Not Dead', Graves offers and seeks comfort from the horrors of the trenches in setting a pastoral scene. He reworked the poem and the differences between the early draft and the published version may reflect his emotional turmoil over Thomas's death. For example, in the manuscript copy sent to Marsh the poem likens Thomas's 'curly' hair to the smoke rising from a nearby chimney (although some photographs of him show it as straightened).<sup>16</sup> In the published version, the line order has changed and Thomas's hair is now replaced by his voice, likened to 'A brook [which] goes bubbling by'. It's possible that Graves removed the reference to hair because it seemed overly personal, and tactile. Compared with Sassoon's lengthy characterization put into Thomas's mouth in 'The Last Meeting' (for example, 'Look in the faces of the flowers and find/The innocence that shrives me'), 'Not Dead' recalls Thomas in more physical, less abstract images. Although Graves often tended toward direct and unsentimental description (see for example his 'The Face in the Mirror'), here his bluntness might suggest difficulties Graves was experiencing in coming to terms with his friend's death. Another version of 'Not Dead', which appears in the Charterhouse School magazine *The Carthusian* in April 1917, renders the penultimate line 'Over the young wood'. Assuming that this single variation wasn't a typographical error, we might wonder if Graves was

attempting to memorialize Thomas as not merely not dead, but forever young.

Paul O'Prey cites 'Not Dead' as Graves's 'second homosexual love poem, although confident that 'it is an affirmation of Graves's intimate but 'pure' (that is, non-consummated) relationship with Thomas.<sup>17</sup> The first, '1915', published in *Over the Brazier* (1916),<sup>18</sup> was purportedly written for Graves's younger fellow-Carthusian George Harcourt Johnstone, later Lord Derwent, or, as Graves referred to him, 'Dick' (coincidentally, Sassoon's fictional name for Thomas). In a letter to Marsh, Graves described Johnstone as 'a poet long before I'll ever be, a radiant and unusual creature'.<sup>19</sup> Graves placed Johnstone, whom he also called 'Peter', on a pedestal in a way that he did not do with Thomas, who seems to have been more of an equal.

O'Prey suggests that in both poems Graves is alone with the respective object of his affections. He also notes Graves's distress in 'Not Dead' at realizing his beloved is dead. However, it is possible to sense another resonance in this poem, rendering 'Not Dead' as almost 'revelatory'. Despite declaring Graves's loss of Christian faith after Thomas's death, 'Not Dead' seems a (pantheistic) meditation on immortality.

Each of these 'love poems' offers a 'sense of ownership', and they are quite different from many of Graves's poems of this era. In *Good-bye to All That*, Graves called his middle youth to early manhood his 'pseudo-homosexual' phase, one that he thought had been inflicted upon him by his public-school education (p. 41). He expressed relief when he thought he passed this phase, following the demise of his friendship with Johnstone after 1917. However, we can read in 'Not Dead' a strain of 'pseudo-homosexuality' continuing a year later.

Michael Longley generalizes on this phenomenon in the introduction to his edition of Graves's war poems, asserting that these are love poems reflecting the sentiments that many soldiers felt for their comrades.<sup>20</sup> John Lewis-Stempel asserts that 'an

officer would love his men'.<sup>21</sup> Santanu Das implies that, traditionally there existed between servicemen in time of war an intense solidarity that sometimes amounted to a greater love than the soldiers felt for their wives and families back home.<sup>22</sup>

Elizabeth Vandiver has noted that the 'classical culture' on which this ethos derived stressed the 'pure, noble and elevating aspects of ancient literature'.<sup>23</sup> Peter Parker notes that that 'the feeling of camaraderie was strengthened by the absence of women at the Front',<sup>24</sup> a phenomenon that Steffen Bruendel illustrates with quotations from the diary of Ernst Jünger, a highly decorated soldier and War memoirist.<sup>25</sup>

Graves brings to 'Not Dead' several associations which are in pertinent to Thomas, and which I have always believed to have arisen from their unrecorded conversations. The first of these, to reiterate, is of woodlands. Graves goes to the woods to 'cool [his] heat and pain', knowing that the spirit of 'David' would be there as he was frequently physically present in life. One can easily imagine Graves, in French woods at the time of Thomas's springtime death, finding solace in his grief for his lost friend.

Thomas had loved the woodlands; his former home at Llanedi, Carmarthenshire, still nestles in its sylvan setting today. The woods which began at the edge of the garden were his playground, filled with trees of many species, overgrown paths, running streams, even a hermit's cave. His bedroom faced west towards the setting sun, straight down into the wood where, as a competent 'outdoorsman' he could observe his latest tree house and Rectory log store; from his parents' bedroom, looking eastwards, his garden bench.

When Sassoon wished to seek the 'face' of the deceased Thomas above Flixecourt in his poem 'The Last Meeting' (published in *The Old Huntsman* in 1917),<sup>26</sup> he first searched in vain in a half-rebuilt house, now known to be the château at Ville-Marcelet, adjacent to Flixecourt.<sup>27</sup> But then he returned without hesitation, probably both literally and metaphorically, to look for

him in the woods – either those immediately behind the Ville-le-Marcelet château or those above Saily-Laurette about twenty miles away.<sup>28</sup> Unsurprisingly, then, Graves is also looking for Thomas, in a French wood. In the best tradition of fairy tales, both men find Thomas waiting for them, as they wished. The meeting also recalls the Christian idea of the afterlife in which the deceased return to greet and comfort the bereft. Graves may have relinquished his faith, however not the surrounding mythology. The poem comments on the idealised traits of Thomas's personality on line three; 'simple, happy, strong' are everyday words whose familiarity would imply Thomas's familiar presence. He repeats them on line nine by way of reaffirming their power. One might assume that they relate characteristics Graves loved most about Thomas, and yet it is an idealised, generalised portrait, rather than a personalised one.

It is interesting to observe that Graves thought to comment on Thomas's strength in 'Not Dead', as Sassoon would in 'The Last Meeting'. The shortest and slightest of the three men, despite athletic prowess at school, Thomas was not especially robust. Note the contrast between this description and that in *Good-bye to all That*, where Thomas is now 'a simple, gentle fellow' and 'fond of reading' (229). Physical immediacy seems to have been replaced over time by emotion recalled in tranquillity.

Lines four and five, 'caressingly I stroke/Rough bark of the friendly oak', seem self-consciously erotic. Written not long before he was to enter into a heterosexual marriage (to Nancy Nicholson in January 1918), they suggest that this period of Graves's life marked a transition by no means straightforward. Arriving at the 'bubbling brook' on line six (which, again, corresponds to experiences in Thomas's youth) Graves's ear picks up traces of Thomas's voice. Thomas had an 'English' accent, but inflected with Welsh overtones (lilting, and possibly sing-song). The accent would have been familiar to Graves from his childhood visits to Harlech, and may have reinforced the sense of

Thomas as a boy (even somewhat ageless), which is how he characterizes him in ‘Goliath and David’.

Incompletely divided from a description of Thomas’s voice is the evocation of what might be a rustic dwelling, its chimney puffing forth turf-burnt smoke (rather than *wood* smoke, as it was in the manuscript version sent to Marsh). In fairy tales, such premises signal to the reader that the protagonist or protagonists have been transported out of the real world into a realm that is



Llanedi Rectory and Churchyard

both irresistible and dangerous. The ‘pleasant smoke’ suggests that this house may be Llanedi Rectory: Graves has arrived at Thomas’s home in the woods, where he knew (poetically) he would find it.

Graves can be observed still standing at a distance from the house on line eight, delighting in the presence of real or imaginary

birds and flowers. In ‘chaffinch’ we get an implication that Graves is meeting Thomas, himself, albeit obliquely, if we can assume that he knew, as David Lloyd reports, that Thomas’s mother called him her ‘cheerful chattering chaffinch’. Graves would only have known this fact if Thomas had told him, and therefore, a covert reference may conceal a private reference to an intimate conversation – one that now assumes the magical form of a conversation with a chaffinch, or Thomas’s spirit in the form of a chaffinch.

To speculate further along these lines, we can link the image of ‘primroses’ to Thomas and to Sassoon. In his diary entry for 19 March 1916, Sassoon notes that he left a rough garland of ivy, together with a ‘primrose for [Thomas’s] yellow hair’ hanging over a beech tree sapling as a memorial.<sup>29</sup> In *Good-bye to All That*, Graves refers to ‘the primrose season’ (245). Primroses (pale yellow flowers), which are prolific in springtime, also appear in the first stanza of ‘1915’.

I’ve watched the Seasons passing slow, so slow,  
In the fields between La Bassée and Béthune;  
Primroses and the first warm day of Spring,  
Red poppy floods of June.

David Lloyd notes that Thomas’s maternal grandfather Thomas Collins associated the primrose with ‘the Little People’ of Celtic myth, a belief presumably handed down from Collins’s Irish antecedents, who believed that primroses had human status, and should therefore not be walked over lest injury be inflicted. It is said that when the Thomases lived in Llanedi Rectory, the primroses that grew all over the glebe were ‘incredible’, and definitely not to be trampled on.

Graves will end the poem before telling the reader whether he stepped over the threshold (to do so, of course, would mean permanent transportation to the land of the dead). He leaves the

reader with the idea that, in spite of his grim night-time burial in France, Thomas now inhabits a sanctuary not unlike his beloved family home. Graves seems to be coming to terms with his own loss of Thomas, and perhaps fears of his own death, by suggesting he has had a vision in which all is well.

Though given to flights of fancy, it was Graves who recorded the exact moment of Thomas's death, which he states matter-of-factly in *Good-bye to all That*,<sup>30</sup> and who had Thomas's personal effects sent back to Llanedi.<sup>31</sup>

The penultimate line 'Over the whole wood in a little while' recalls Blake's 'Auguries of Innocence': 'To see a World in a Grain of Sand/And a Heaven in a Wild Flower'. Infinite feeling is contained within an individual human limit – the whole emotional world within one beloved. Finally, the last phrase 'Breaks his slow smile' contains another covert reference to Thomas. In 'A Subaltern' (1916), Sassoon, records Thomas's smile as 'brightening to the grin'. According to David Lloyd, Thomas had a particular way of smiling, which mirrored his sunny but thoughtful nature.

Graves and Sassoon both loved then missed Thomas dearly. Both travel through their respective poems very differently. Even allowing for the difference of scale between the two poems, Sassoon in 'The Last Meeting' takes much the longer to find Thomas, mainly because he is concerned with telling a tale: still in love with Thomas, he is responding 'erotically' to the search. In the first printing of the poem, Sassoon, the musician, as if he were writing in sonata form, divides the account of his quest into three numbered sections over 131 lines, taking seventy of these lines to locate him. He sustains the climactic discovery of Thomas for just over forty lines, before winding down through eighteen lines to the end of the poem. Graves finds Thomas almost immediately – a more 'male-like' response.

Illustrated here are two markedly different literary styles. In spite of its brevity, 'Not Dead' may be more effective than

Sassoon's: the omnipresence that is Thomas can be *felt* from the outset. The poem works as a 'direct hit' to the reader's senses: Graves is making a public affirmation of his love for David Thomas. Moreover, it has a poignant family association beyond its dedicatee, as it was the poem that Ethelinda Thomas occasionally read to her grandchildren to remind them of their late uncle.

On the surface, 'Not Dead' remains what Patrick Quinn has described as an 'escapist pastoral',<sup>32</sup> which may indeed be how Graves wished it to be received, rather than as a love poem, since its initial readership was mostly male. Graves asked Sassoon to distribute copies of the collection *Goliath and David* as gifts to soldiers they had known in the Royal Welch Fusiliers, as a comfort to them – a gesture that reinforces the idea Thomas served as a kind of 'salve' for Graves's psychological 'heat and pain'. Michael Kirkham criticizes Graves for largely indulging in a regressive fantasy that essentially fails to confront the real world of adult relationships.<sup>33</sup> What Kirkham assumes constitutes 'adult relationships' is unclear, just as it was over a century ago when Edward Carpenter was publishing his ground breaking work on homosexuality, *The Intermediate Sex: a Study of Some Transitional Types of Men and Women*.<sup>34</sup> Graves wrote to Carpenter in respect of his own confused feelings as early as 1914, whilst still a boy at Charterhouse. In his letter, he indicates that reading Carpenter's work had 'absolutely taken the scales from [his] eyes', causing him 'immense elation'.<sup>35</sup> He gives credit to Carpenter for providing a convincing explanation for all the problems, doubts, and suspicions he had been troubled by in his outlook on sex: now, he confesses, he could see clearly. Is it inconceivable that his friendship with Thomas, barely two years later, was influenced by Carpenter's insights?

Positioned touchingly at the end of the collection *Goliath and David*, 'Not Dead' is the seal on both the collection and a unique three-way friendship. Sue Curtis placed 'Not Dead' last in her compilation of Graves's poems set in *The Cool Web*, and in doing

so made Thomas the focus for the entire work, dedicating the first performance to him, by way of honouring all those who fell in the Great War. For Curtis, 'Not Dead' was also an appropriate ending to a very sad story, and for Graves, as she saw it, 'part of the bitter realisation that the [heroic] legends of the past no longer held.'

That the collection *Goliath and David* should be such a personal record of the friendship between Graves, Sassoon and Thomas is unsurprising. While staying with Robert in Wales, Sassoon largely edited *Goliath and David* as Graves collated it, while working on his own forthcoming collection *The Old Huntsman*.<sup>36</sup> He and Graves wanted their books to show the true human cost of war, as it affected them, partly through the image of their 'Parsifal' David Thomas. And both books were to be memorials of tragic friendship. In *The Old Huntsman*, the poems 'The Last Meeting, and the more positive and 'chummy' piece 'A Letter Home' come at the end, just as 'Not Dead' does in *Goliath and David*. The final elegiac note joins these books together, just as Graves and Sassoon were joined in their loss of David Thomas.

When we read 'Not Dead' in the light of Graves's own acknowledged 'pseudo-homosexuality', elements of the poem assume a different importance. Having met Thomas, it seems that Graves, too, fell in love with him, at a time when his infatuation with Johnstone was still unsettling to him. In Thomas, Graves found a sympathetic figure responsive to his emotional needs – Thomas showed him unconditional friendship. One is left to wonder whether Graves's affections were returned? Was the poem 'Not Dead' perhaps an account of a romantic (or pseudo-romantic) excursion with Thomas?

I have tried here to suggest that David Thomas may well have had a deeper and longer lasting significance for Graves, despite the brevity of their friendship. Graves's remark in the autobiography that he had 'felt David's death worse than any other death since [he] had been in France', could suggest a more complex relationship than we have been able to uncover (251). By

falling in love with Thomas, Graves may have found his period of so-called ‘pseudo-homosexuality’ uncomfortably extended, and Thomas’s death may have been the incident that buried these feelings irrevocably. Yet to return to the suggestively titled ‘Not Dead’, the poem’s final couplet – ‘Over the whole wood in a little while/Breaks his slow smile’ – suggests perhaps a yearning that never entirely vanished.

**Anne Marsh Penton** is a pianist, composer and piano teacher, as well as the musical director of *The Dollard Collectief*, a not-for-profit poetry and music group promoted by Diadorim Arts, Gothenburg, Sweden. She also writes about various members of her family.

---

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Robert Graves, *Good-bye to All That* (London: Cape, 1929), pp. 69-70.

<sup>2</sup> Graves to Edward Marsh, 7 August 1916, 63B3469, Edward Howard Marsh Collection, Berg, New York Public Library.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Perceval Graves, *Robert Graves: the Assault Heroic, 1895-1926* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986), p. 142.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Graves, *Goliath and David* (London: Chiswick, 1917).

<sup>5</sup> Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 241.

<sup>6</sup> Martin Seymour-Smith, *Robert Graves: His Life and Work* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982), pp. 45-47.

<sup>7</sup> Miranda Seymour, *Robert Graves: Life on the Edge* (London: Doubleday, 1995), p. 49.

<sup>8</sup> Adrian Caesar, *Taking it Like a Man: Suffering, Sexuality and the War Poets: Brooke, Sassoon, Owen, Graves* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 73-75, 187.

<sup>9</sup> Author’s private conversations with Thomas’s sister Irene Bennett and his cousin Isabel Irwin.

<sup>10</sup> Seymour-Smith, p. 45.

<sup>11</sup> R.P. Graves, p. 161.

<sup>12</sup> Sue Curtis, 'David', *The Cool Web: a Robert Graves Oratorio* (blog) (21 September 2014) <<http://robertgravesoratorio.co.uk/david/>> [accessed 18 October 2018]; Robert Graves, *Robert Graves War Poems*, ed. by Charles Mundye (Bridgend, Wales: Seren, 2016), p. 22.

<sup>13</sup> Graves to Edward Marsh, 4 April 1916, 63B3467, Edward Howard Marsh Collection, Berg, New York Public Library.

<sup>14</sup> Paul Fussell, p. 280.

<sup>15</sup> Anne Mounic, *Counting the Beats: Robert Graves' Poetry of Unrest* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012), pp. 58-59, 85.

<sup>16</sup> Graves to Edward Marsh, 4 April 1916.

<sup>17</sup> Paul O'Prey, *The Poetry of Robert Graves: 1914-1946*. (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Bristol, 1993), pp. 54-56.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Graves, *Over the Brazier* (London: Poetry Bookshop, 1916).

<sup>19</sup> Graves to Edward Marsh, October 1915, *In Broken Images: Selected Letters of Robert Graves 1914-1946*, ed. by Paul O'Prey (London: Hutchinson, 1982), pp. 34-36.

<sup>20</sup> Robert Graves, *Selected Poems*, ed. Michael Longley (London: Faber & Faber, 2014), p. xx.

<sup>21</sup> John Lewis-Stempel, *Six Weeks: the Short and Gallant Life of the British Officer in the First World War*. Paperback edn (London: Orion, 2011), p. 52.

<sup>22</sup> Santanu Das, *Touch and Intimacy in First World War Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth Vandiver, *Stand in the Trench, Achilles: Classical Receptions in British Poetry of the Great War*. Paperback edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 42.

<sup>24</sup> Peter Parker, *The Old Lie: The Great War and the Public School Ethos* (London: Constable, 1987), p. 178.

<sup>25</sup> Steffen Bruendel, *Zeitenwende 1914: Künstler, Dichter und Denker im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Munich: Herbig, 2014); Ernst Jünger's *Stahlgewittern [Storm of Steel]*, privately printed in 1920, was one of the first memoirs of the First World War.

<sup>26</sup> Siegfried Sassoon, *The Old Huntsman* (London: Heinemann, 1917).

<sup>27</sup> Tim Penton, 'Flixecourt and "The Last Meeting"' in *Siegfried's Journal* (Aberdeen: Siegfried Sassoon Fellowship, 2018). Forthcoming

<sup>28</sup> Siegfried Sassoon, *Journal*, 13 Mar. 1916-2May 1916. (Cambridge University Library MS Add. 9852/1/5) p. 41.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 42.

<sup>30</sup> *Good-bye to All That*, p. 250.

<sup>31</sup> Great Britain. War Office. 1916. *File WO 339/51441 – 2 Lt David Cuthbert Thomas* [unpaginated] National Archives, London.

<sup>32</sup> Patrick J. Quinn, *The Great War and the Missing Muse: the Early Writings of Robert Graves and Siegfried Sassoon* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1994), pp. 41-42.

<sup>33</sup> Michael Kirkham, *The Poetry of Robert Graves* (London: Athlone, 1969), pp. 21-22.

<sup>34</sup> Edward Carpenter, *The Intermediate Sex* (London: Sonnenschein, 1908).

<sup>35</sup> Graves to Edward Carpenter, 30 May 1914. MSS. 386-234, Carpenter Collection, Sheffield City Archives.

<sup>36</sup> R.P. Graves, p. 161.