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| **Isaac Rosenberg****Break of Day in the Trenches**The darkness crumbles away.It is the same old druid Time as ever,Only a live thing leaps my hand,A queer sardonic rat,As I pull the parapet's poppyTo stick behind my ear.Droll rat, they would shoot you if they knewYour cosmopolitan sympathies.Now you have touched this English handYou will do the same to a GermanSoon, no doubt, if it be your pleasureTo cross the sleeping green between.It seems you inwardly grin as you passStrong eyes, fine limbs, haughty athletes,Less chanced than you for life,Bonds to the whims of murder,Sprawled in the bowels of the earth,The torn fields of France.What do you see in our eyesAt the shrieking iron and flameHurled through still heavens ?What quaver--what heart aghast?Poppies whose roots are in man's veinsDrop, and are ever dropping;But mine in my ear is safe--Just a little white with the dust. |