There is no rancour in my heart against the hardy soldiers of the Enemy, but the kinship that there is among men in prison on a tidal rock waiting for the sea flowing and making cold the warm stone; and the coldness of life in the hot sun of the Desert.

But this is the struggle not to be avoided, the sore extreme of human-kind, and though I do not hate Rommel's army the brain's eye is not squinting.

And be what was as it was, I am of the big men of Braes, of the heroic Raasay MacLeods, of the sharp-sword Mathesons of Lochalsh; and the men of my name—who were braver when their ruinous pride was kindled?

AN AUTUMN DAY

On that slope on an autumn day, the shells soughing about my ears and six dead men at my shoulder, dead and stiff—and frozen were it not for the heat—as if they were waiting for a message.

When the screech came out of the sun, out of an invisible throbbing; the flame leaped and the smoke climbed and surged every way: blinding of eyes, splitting of hearing.
And after it, the six men dead
the whole day:
among the shells snoring
in the morning,
and again at midday
and in the evening.

In the sun, which was so indifferent,
so white and painful;
on the sand which was so comfortable
easy and kindly;
and under the stars of Africa,
jewelled and beautiful.

One Election took them
and did not take me,
without asking us
which was better or worse:
it seemed as devilishly indifferent
as the shells.

Six men dead at my shoulder
on an Autumn day.

SPRING TIDE

Again and again when I am broken
my thought comes on you when you were young,
and the incomprehensible ocean fills
with floodtide and a thousand sails.

The shore of trouble is hidden
with its reefs and the wrack of grief,
and the unbreaking wave strikes
about my feet with a silken rubbing.

How did the springtide not last,
the springtide more golden to me than to the birds,
and how did I lose its succour,
ebbing drop by drop of grief?