

TO A CHILDLESS WOMAN

BY SIEGFRIED SASSOON

You think I cannot understand. Ah,
but I do.
I have been wrung with anger and
compassion for you.
I wonder if you'd loathe my pity, if
you knew.

But you *shall* know. I've carried in
my heart too long
This secret burden. Has not silence
wrought *your* wrong —
Brought you to dumb and wintry
middle-age, with gray
Unfruitful withering? — Ah, the pitiless
things I say!

What do you ask your God for, at the
end of day,
Kneeling beside your bed with bowed
and hopeless head?
What mercy can He give you? —
dreams of the unborn
Children that haunt your soul like
loving words unsaid —
Dreams, as a song half-heard through
sleep in early morn'g?

I see you in the chapel where you bend
before
The enhaloed calm of everlasting
Motherhood
That wounds your life: I see you hum-
bled to adore
The painted miracle you've never
understood.

Tender and bitter, sweet and shy, I've
watched you holding
Another's child. O childless woman,
was it then
That, with an instant's cry, your heart,
made young again,
Was crucified forever — those poor
arms enfolding
The life, the consummation that had
been denied you?

I too have longed for children. Ah, but
you must not weep.
Something I have to whisper as I
kneel beside you.
And you must pray for me before you
fall asleep.

The Nation

A SONNET

BY A. B.

Think not I love thee out of self's
excess
With stealthy heart, intent on
brigandage,
Questing the plume of beauty's
equipage
To ornament a mood of loneliness.
'T is not the treasure of a silken tress,
The solace of thy lips, thy hand's
engage
Or any kindred bounty shall assuage
The secret origins of life's distress.
For in the flame of love a purpose
thrives
Than passion's grapes more sweet,
far worthier than
Ambition's gold or fame's meridian;
More than the compass of our little
lives,
Love is the pulse of the eternal plan,
The seraph's fire — the spirit that
survives.

The New Witness

INVOCATION

BY W. KEAN SEYMOUR

Let there be loveliness and light
For her whose beauty makes me sing,
Let nothing be before her sight
To make despair or shuddering.

So in the quiet of her eyes,
Gazing, I shall desery the gleam
Of Love's immortal sanctities
And youth's imperishable dream.

The New Witness