

Walter de la Mare (1873-1956)

1 *The Ghost*

'Who knocks?' 'I, who was beautiful,
Beyond all dreams to restore,
I, from the roots of the dark thorn am hither,
And knock on the door.'

'Who speaks?' 'I — once was my speech 5
Sweet as the bird's on the air.
When echo lurks by the waters to heed;
'Tis I speak thee fair.'

'Dark is the hour!' 'Ay, and cold.'
'Lone is my house.' 'Ah, but mine?' 10
'Sight, touch, lips, eyes yearned in vain.'
'Long dead these to thine . . . '

Silence. Still faint on the porch
Brake the flames of the stars.
In gloom groped a hope-wearied hand 15
Over keys, bolts, and bars.

A face peered. All the grey night
In chaos of vacancy shone;
Nought but vast sorrow was there —
The sweet cheat gone. 20

1918

(From *Poems 1901 to 1918*. 2 vols. London: Constable and
Co. Ltd., 1920)