

Alfred Noyes (1880-1959)

4 *A Victory Dance*

The cymbals crash,
And the dancers walk,
With long silk stockings
And arms of chalk,
Butterfly skirts, 5
And white breasts bare,
And shadows of dead men
Watching 'em there.

Shadows of dead men
Stand by the wall, 10
Watching the fun
Of the Victory Ball.
They do not reproach,
Because they know,
If they're forgotten, 15
It's better so.

Under the dancing
Feet are the graves.
Dazzle and motley,
In long bright waves, 20
Brushed by the palm-fronds
Grapple and whirl
Ox-eyed matron,
And slim white girl.

Fat wet bodies 25
Go waddling by,
Girdled with satin,
Though God knows why;
Gripped by satyrs
In white and black, 30
With a fat wet hand
On the fat wet back.

*God, how the dead men
Grin by the wall,
Watching the fun
Of the Victory Ball.*

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Blackwood & Sons, 1928)