

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

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Co. Ltd., 1920)