



Munster Fusilier recruits marching through Middleton, Co. Cork, early months of the war



Destruction in Louvain, Belgium, after German bombardment

# SLEEPWALK OF SLAUGHTER

CORK, IRELAND & THE GREAT WAR



**The Last Absolution of the Munsters at Rue du Bois**  
Painting by **Fortunino Matania**  
(commissioned by Jessie Louisa Rickard, Cork)

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# THE CALL TO ARMS

The exact number of Irishmen and Irishwomen who served in World War I is still a matter of discussion, not least because Irish-born soldiers and sailors enlisted in many other nations' forces, as well as the British Army and Royal navy. It is generally agreed, however, that the total is more than 200,000.

**THE ROYAL MUNSTER FUSILIERS**  
are earning eternal  
fame fighting  
for **YOU**  
Will the fine lads of  
KERRY, CORK, LIMERICK & CLARE  
do nothing to help  
their kinsmen?  
COME ALONG AND ASSIST IN DESTROYING THE  
**German Menace**

Right: There were eight infantry regiments of the British Army mainly recruited in Ireland; recruiting areas and depots are shown in this map



Right: British Army recruitment poster

Below right: British Army band playing outside the recruiting office on St Patrick's Street



## "You'll all go, won't you lads?"

Erich Maria Remarque's classic novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* provides a German perspective on the frenzy of recruitment at the start of the War

"one of our class was reluctant (to join), and didn't really want to go with us. But in the end he let himself be persuaded, because he would have made things impossible for himself by not going. Maybe others felt the same way as he did; but it wasn't easy to stay out of it because at that time even our parents used the word 'coward' at the drop of a hat. People simply didn't have the slightest idea of what was coming"  
"As a matter of fact it was the poorest and simplest people who were the most sensible; they saw the war as a disaster right from the start..."

Below: German soldiers pose for a studio photograph before heading off to war in 1914



John Redmond, MP, the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, offered Irish support for the British war effort in exchange for Home Rule. Redmond's offer was based on a mix of pragmatism and principle. Like the majority of his countrymen in August 1914, he supported the war against the Germans who had invaded 'plucky little Belgium'.

He was also of the view that at the conclusion of the war, which he expected Britain to win, Ireland's case for Home Rule would be fatally compromised if Irishmen did not answer 'The Call to Arms'.



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Lieutenant William Redmond MP, brother of Irish Party leader John Redmond, addressing a recruiting meeting at the North Gate Bridge, 15 September 1915.  
Picture courtesy Irish Examiner.



# ‘THE BREATH OF ARMAGEDDON’

In 1914 efforts to win support for the war, and encourage Irishmen to enlist, focused very much on the fate of Belgium, like Ireland a small, mainly Catholic country.



Belgium, a country whose neutrality was guaranteed by the major powers, was invaded by the German forces as they sought to defeat France.

Left: Germany invades Belgium. Cartoon by F.H. Townsend, in *Punch* magazine, August 1914

Below: Louvain, Belgium, August 1914

Main picture: Termonde, Belgium, August 1914

Tom Kettle, former Irish Party MP, and Professor of Economics in UCD, was in Belgium when war broke out, attempting to source weapons for the Irish Volunteers, that were planned to be landed on the Cork coast. Kettle was profoundly shocked by the destruction he saw in the first weeks of the war, and wrote of what he saw in the small town of Termonde in his accounts for the *Daily News*:

“Today Termonde is a tumbled avalanche of brick, stone, twisted iron and shattered glass over which the remaining public buildings rise like cliffs over a flood. I walked very foot of every street. In the Rue de l’Eglise, the chief street, ... it is as if the breath of Armageddon had withered it. In the Marché au Lin the Church of the Recolletes and the National bank lie disembowelled. It was here the Germans laid on the pavement the sick and wounded while they burned the beds from which they dragged them, and the roof that had sheltered them”.

**THE HUNS  
HAVE DESECRATED & DESTROYED THE  
CATHEDRALS OF FRANCE & BELGIUM**



British Army recruiting poster

“The Germans sentenced Louvain on Wednesday to become a wilderness and with the German system and love of thoroughness they left Louvain an empty and blackened shell”

Richard Harding Davis *New York Tribune* 31 August 1914



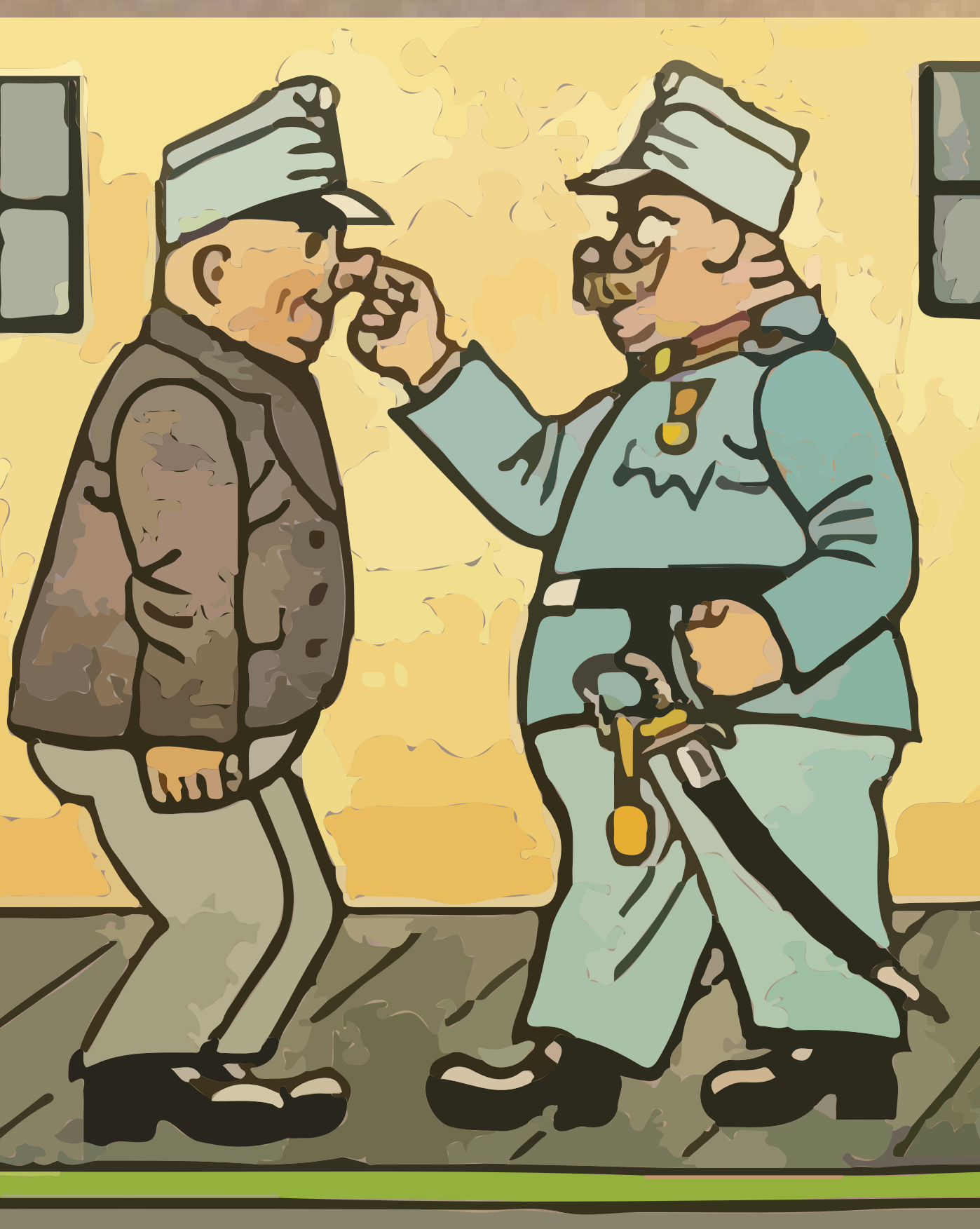
Kettle, in a later account made it clear where he stood on Ireland’s involvement

“No man has the right to offer an opinion on any subject that is a matter of evidence until he has read that evidence. In such a conflict to counsel Ireland to stand neutral in judgement is as if one were to counsel a Christian to stand neutral in judgement between Nero and St. Paul”.

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# AUGUST 1914: FRENZY & FEAR



## PRAGUE

"And so they've killed our Ferdinand" said the charwoman to Mr. Švejk.

"Which Ferdinand, Mrs. Muller?" he asked "I know two Ferdinands. One is a messenger at Průša's, the chemist's, and once by mistake he drank a bottle of hair oil there. And the other is Ferdinand Kokoška who collects dog manure. Neither of them is any loss"

"Oh no, sir, it's His Imperial Highness, the Archduke Ferdinand, from Konopiště, the fat churchy one".

"Jesus Maria!" exclaimed Švejk. "What a grand job! And where did it happen to His Imperial Highness?"

"They bumped him off at Sarajevo, sir, with a revolver, you know. He drove there in a car with his Archduchess".

Jaroslav Hasek *The Good Soldier Svejk*

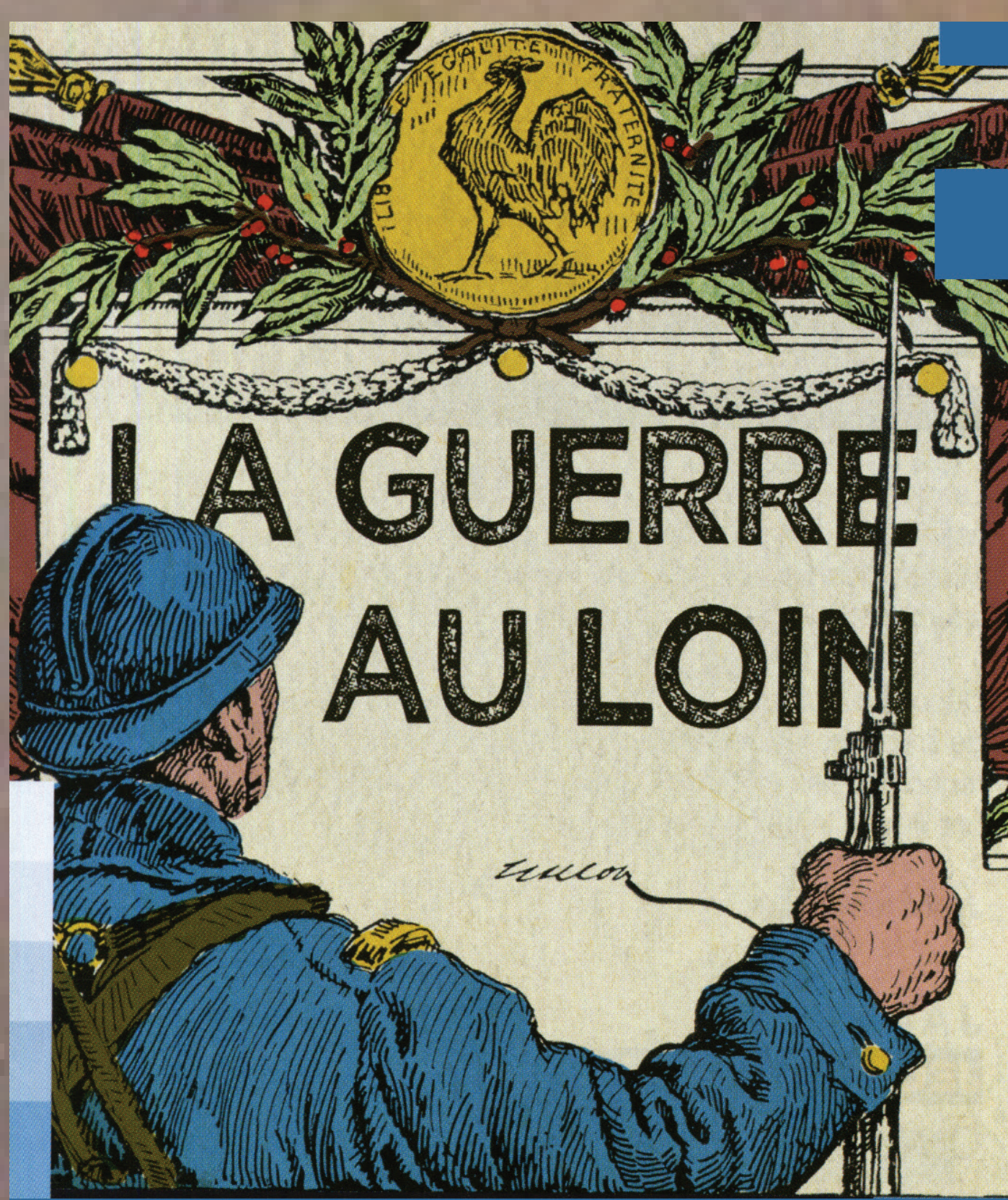
## CORK

"Nothing that ever happened, nothing that was ever even willed, planned or envisaged, could seem irrelevant. War is not an accident: it is an outcome. One cannot look back too far to ask, of what?"

Elizabeth Bowen  
*Bowen's Court*



Elizabeth Bowen



## PARIS

"There was no outbreak of Jingo fever, no demonstration of bloodlust against Germany in Paris or any town in France as the people waited for the fateful decision ...

"On August 1 there was a run on one of the banks. 'We are ruined already' said a woman.

'This war will take all our money. Oh my God!' She made her way through the crowd with a fixed white face.

"The quietness of Paris was astounding, and the first mobilization orders were issued with no more publicity than attends the delivery of a trade circular through the halfpenny post".

Philip Gibbs, *Daily Chronicle* correspondent in Paris



## LONDON

"It was in the streets, on August 4, 1914, after the House of Commons had adjourned, that I found myself in an atmosphere of real passion ... All were already touched with war fever.

"at the approach of the decisive hour of eleven (midnight German time) when the ultimatum to Germany was to expire, we returned in our thousands to Whitehall.

"Then came the slow and measured strokes of Big Ben proclaiming to London that it was eleven o'clock"

Michael McDonagh, parliamentary correspondent *The Times*

Left: Crowds in Trafalgar Square after Britain's declaration of war on Germany



### COUNTDOWN TO WAR

**28 June:** Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne assassinated in Sarajevo

**5 July:** Germany assures Austro-Hungarian Empire of 'faithful support'

**28 July:** Austro-Hungarian Empire declares war on Serbia

**31 July:** Austro-Hungarian Empire and Russia order full mobilization

**1 August:** Germany orders full mobilization

**2 August:** Germany invades Luxembourg

**3 August:** Germany declares war on France

**4 August:** Germany invades Belgium; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland declares war on Germany

**5 August:** First group of reservists depart from the Great Southern & Western Railway Station, Lower Rd, Cork, 12.45pm

## BERLIN

"You will be home before the leaves have fallen from the trees"

Kaiser Wilhelm II, to his troops, August 1914

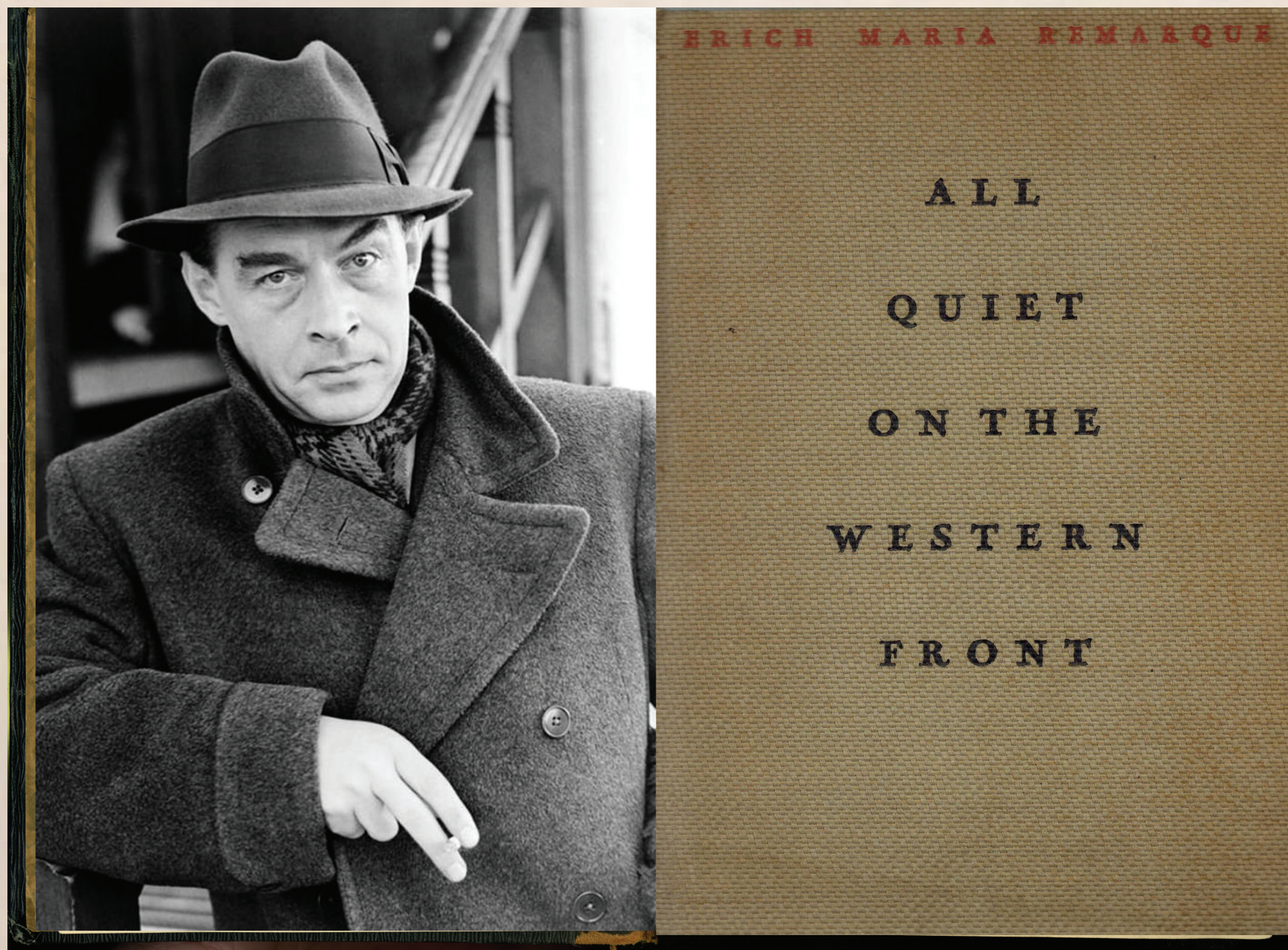


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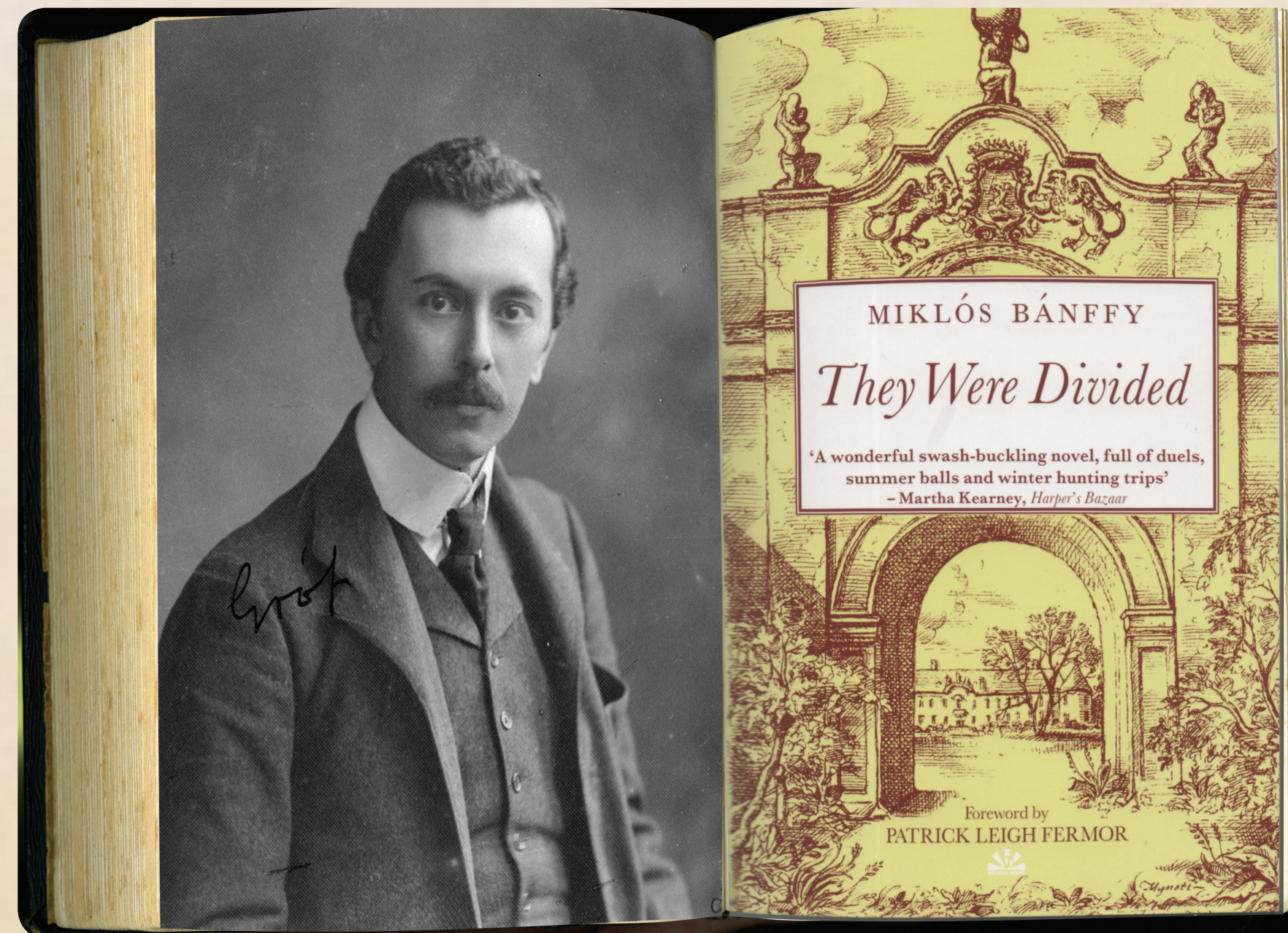
Kaiser Wilhelm II (on left) and his six sons, Berlin 1913



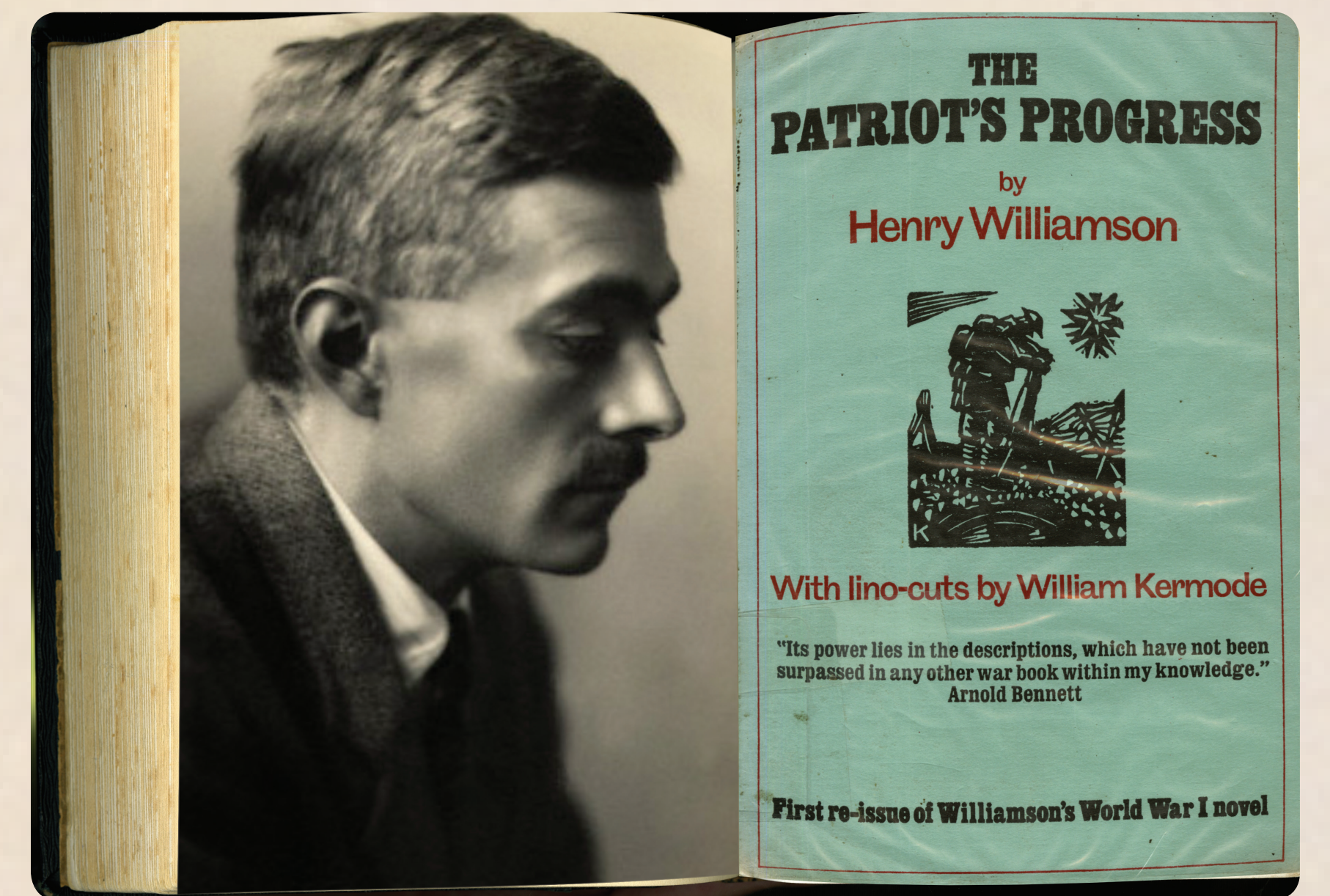
# NOVELS OF THE GREAT WAR



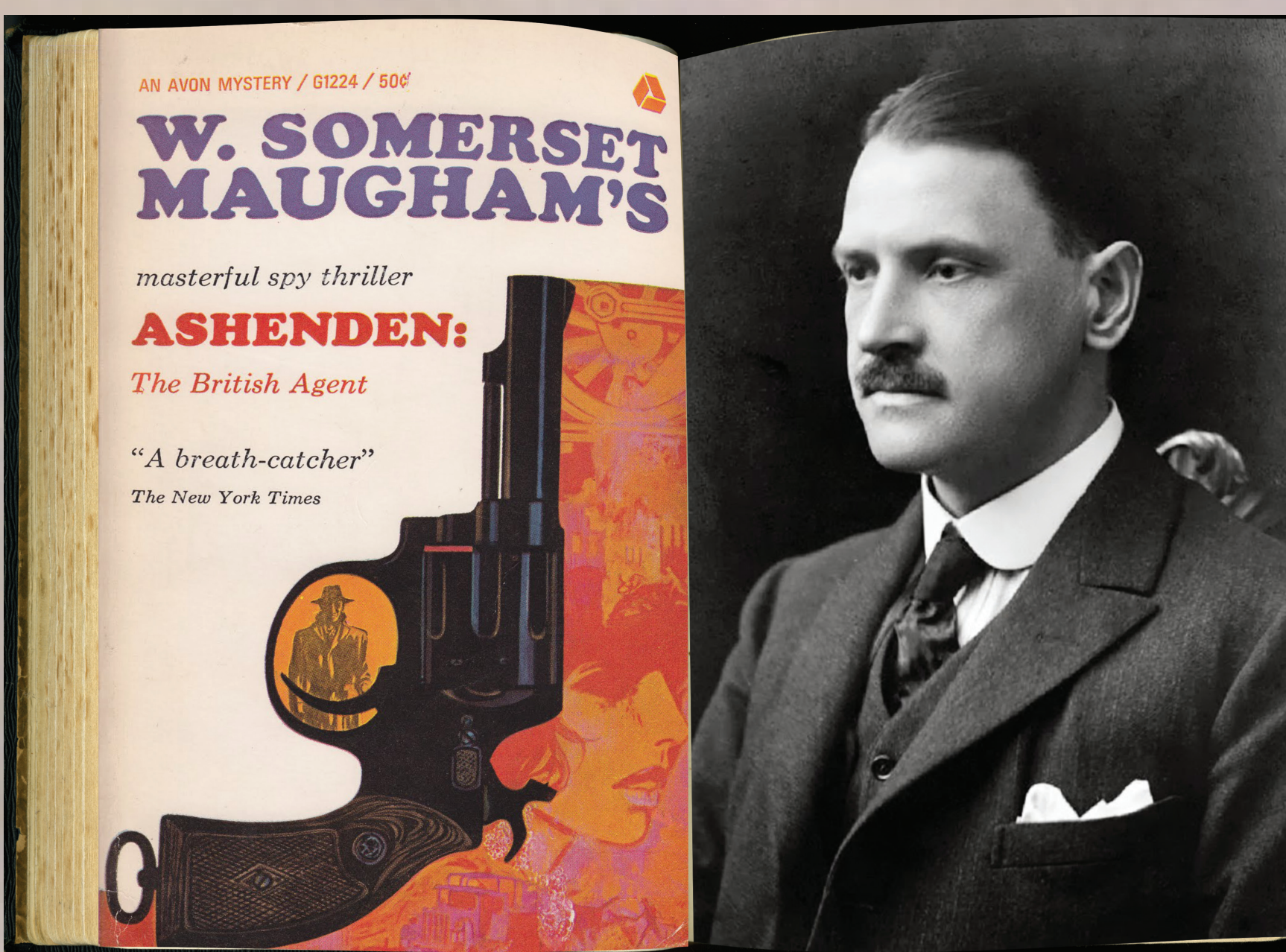
Published ten years after the end of the war this novel describes the toll that war takes on young men and their inability to adjust to civilian life afterwards.



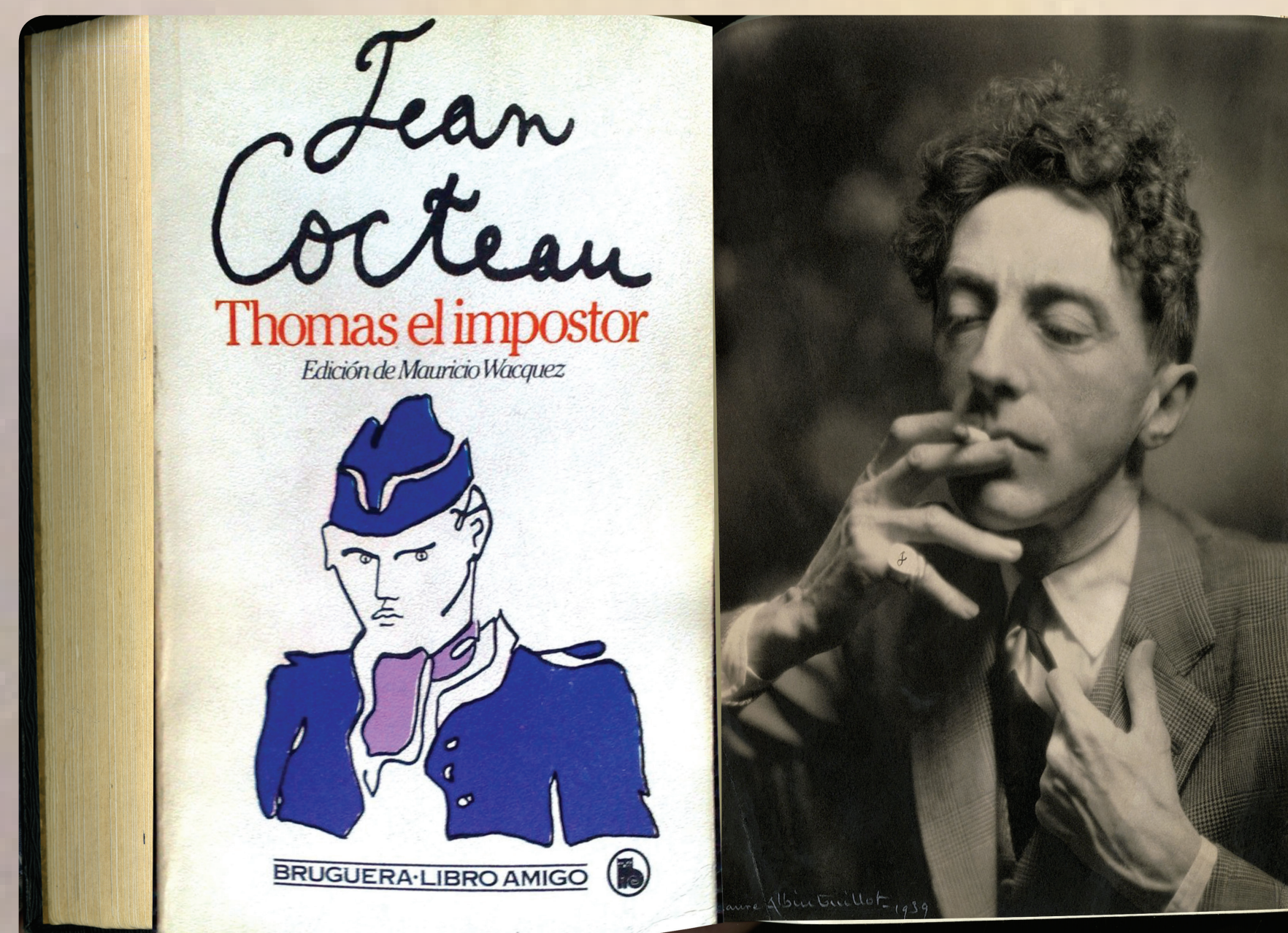
Volume three of The Transylvanian Trilogy covers events in the Balkans, the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand and the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.



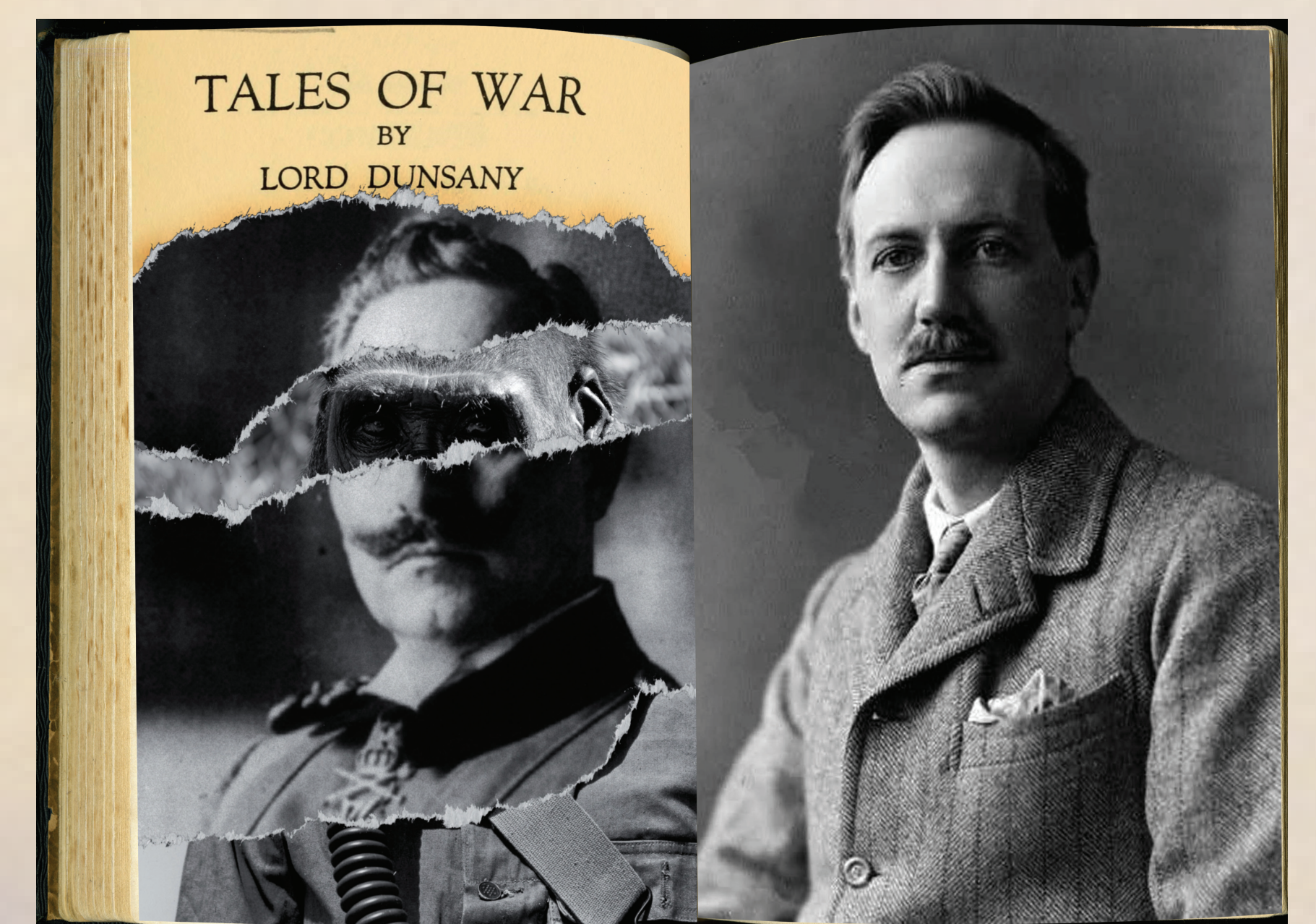
A fictionalised account of the author's experiences in the trenches in the Great War.



A collection of short stories based on the author's experiences as a member of British Intelligence during World War 1

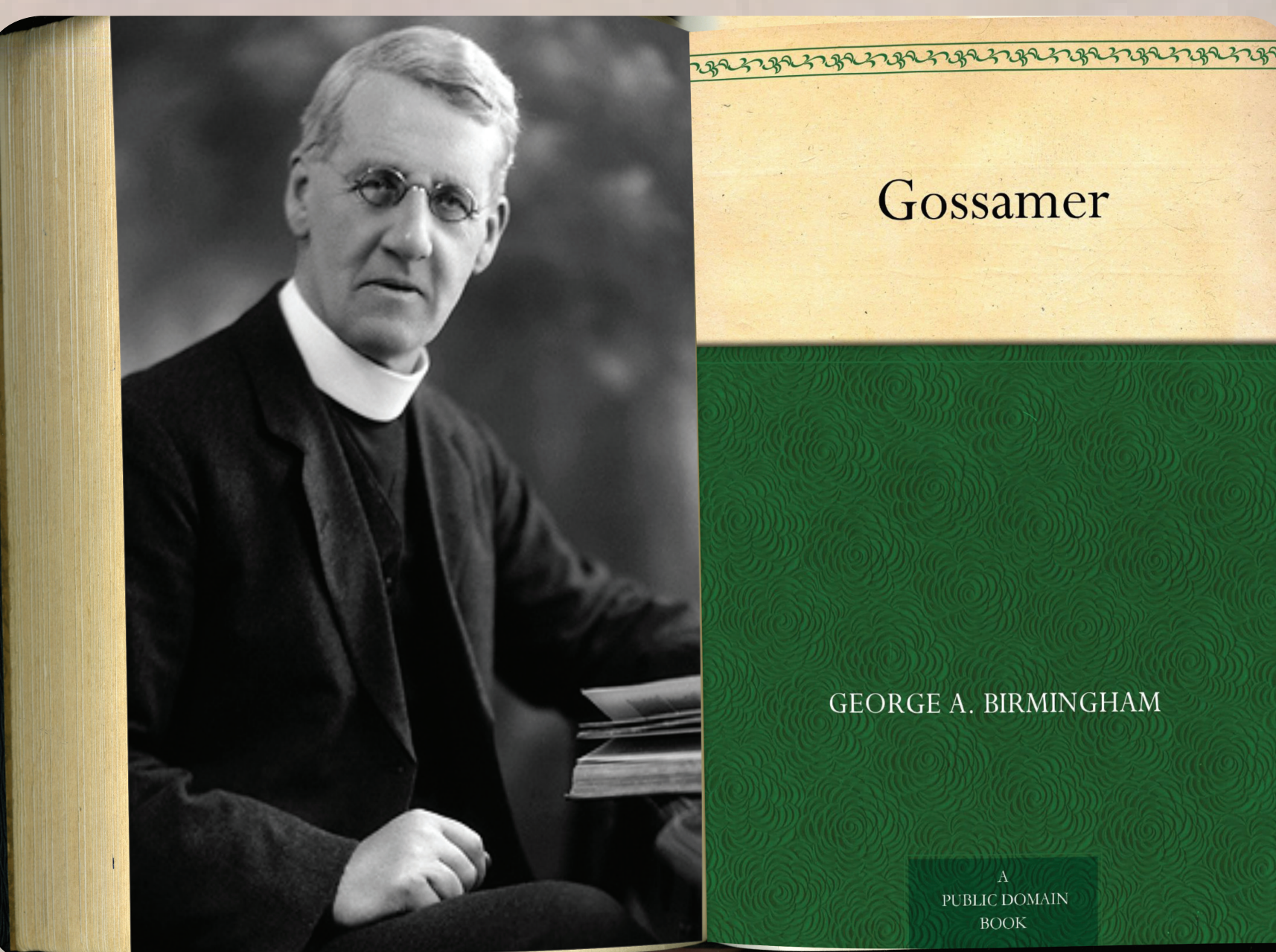
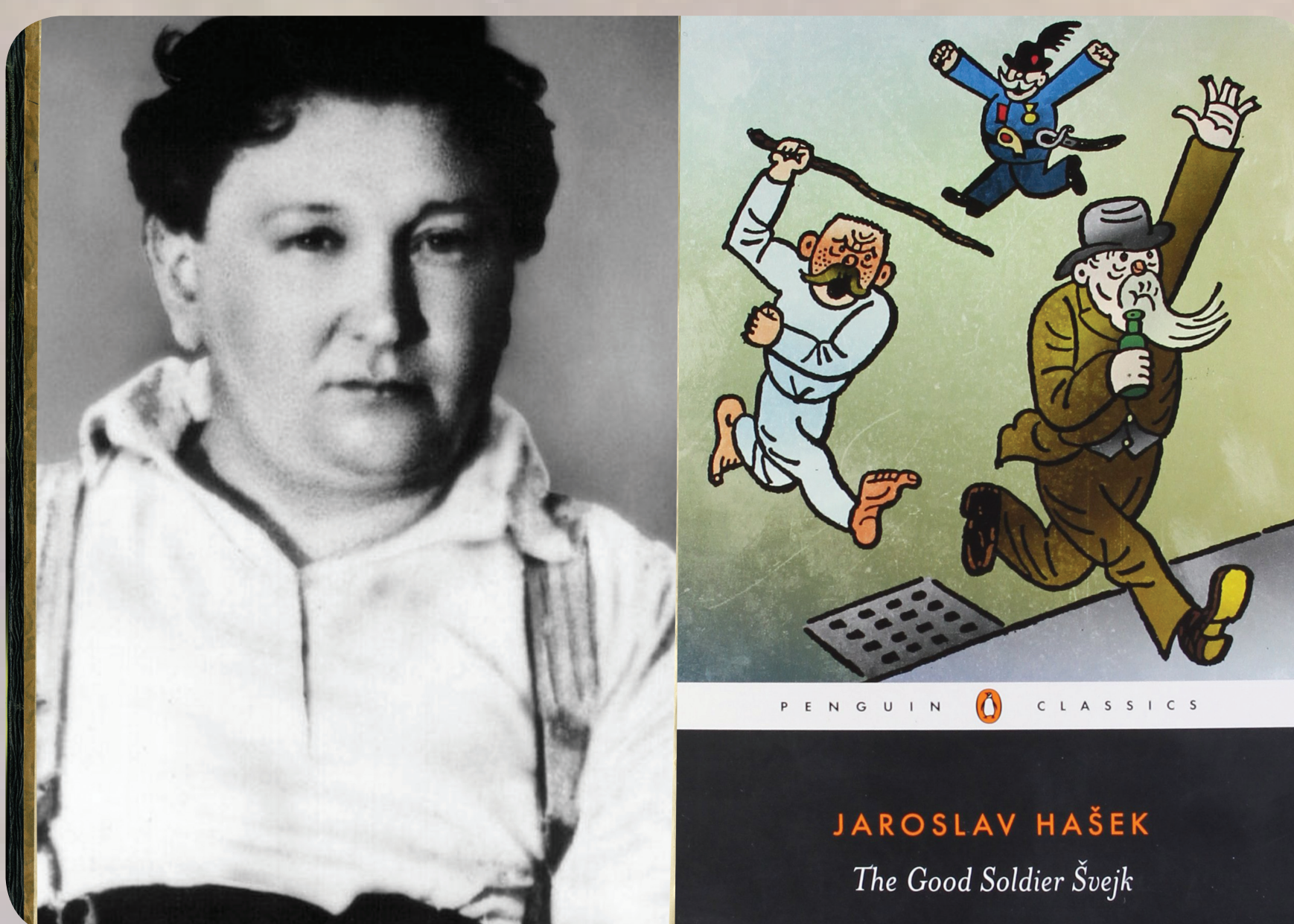


Both a subtle anti-war novel and coming of age novel, a youth lies about his age (quite a common act at the time) assumes a new identity and enlists to fight in the Great War with the inevitable tragic consequences.

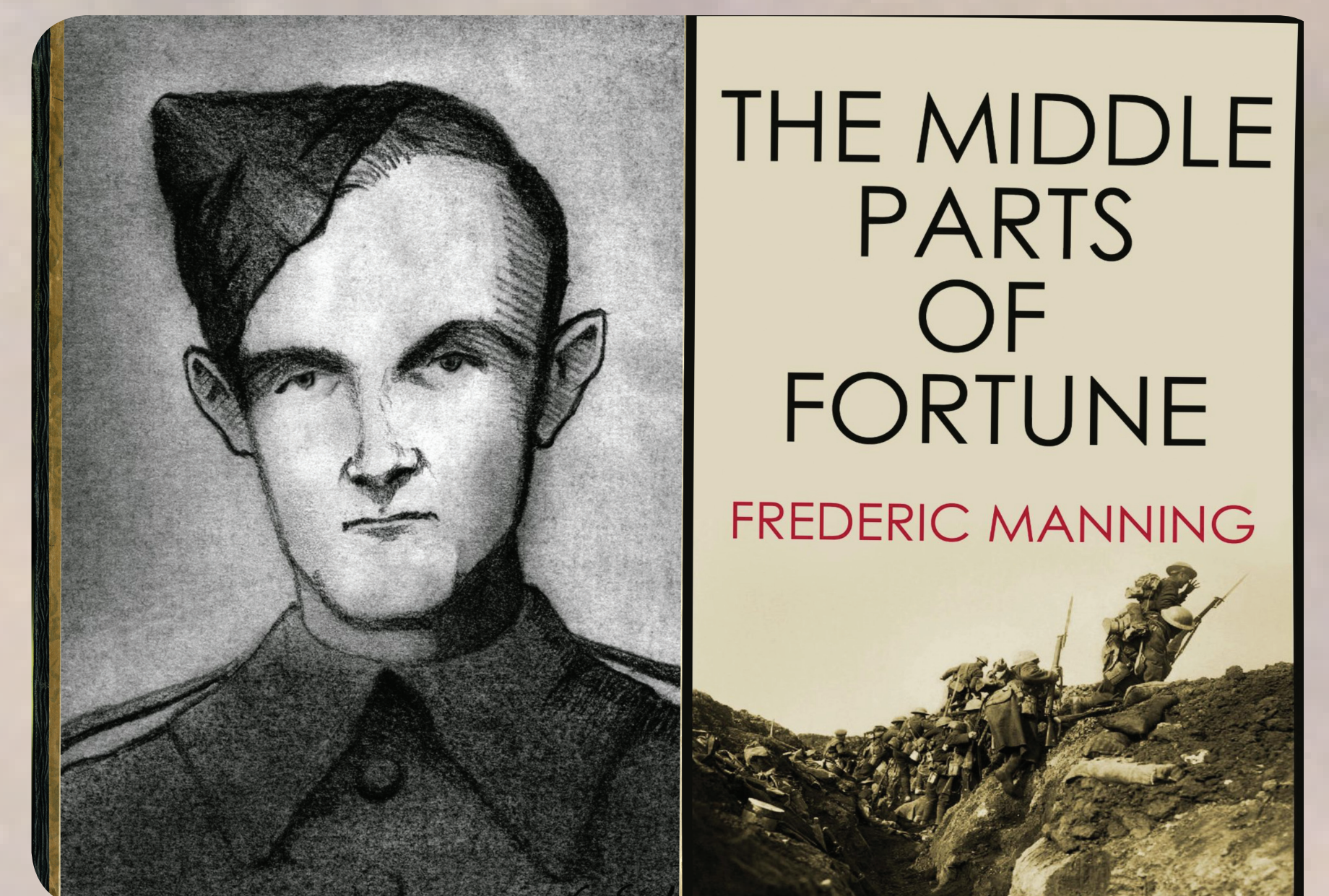


A departure from Dunsany's usual works of drama and fantasy fiction this is another collection of personally inspired wartime experiences.

This novel explores the absurdity of war through a series of comic episodes



Opening in 1915 this story, told in retrospect, explores events leading up to the war in Ireland.



Manning fought in the Battle of the Somme and experienced life in the trenches which inspired this novel of the lives of ordinary soldiers in extreme circumstances.

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Jaroslav Hašek  
*The good soldier Švejk*

Henry Williamson  
*The patriot's progress*

Erich Maria Remarque  
*All quiet on the Western Front*

Jean Cocteau  
*Thomas the impostor*

W. Somerset Maugham  
*Ashenden*

George A Birmingham  
*Gossamer*

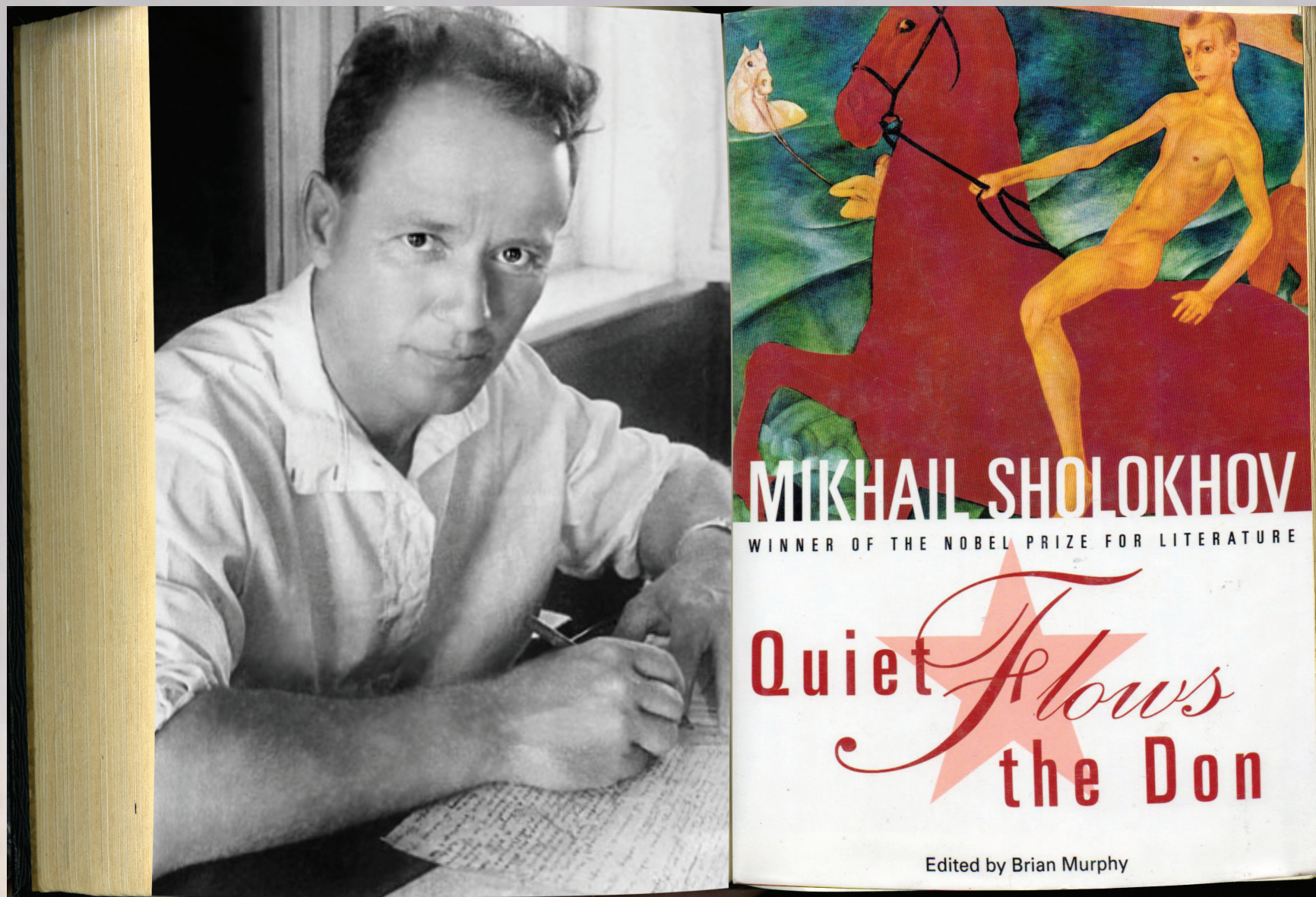
Lord Dunsany  
*Tales of war*

Miklós Bánffy  
*They were divided*

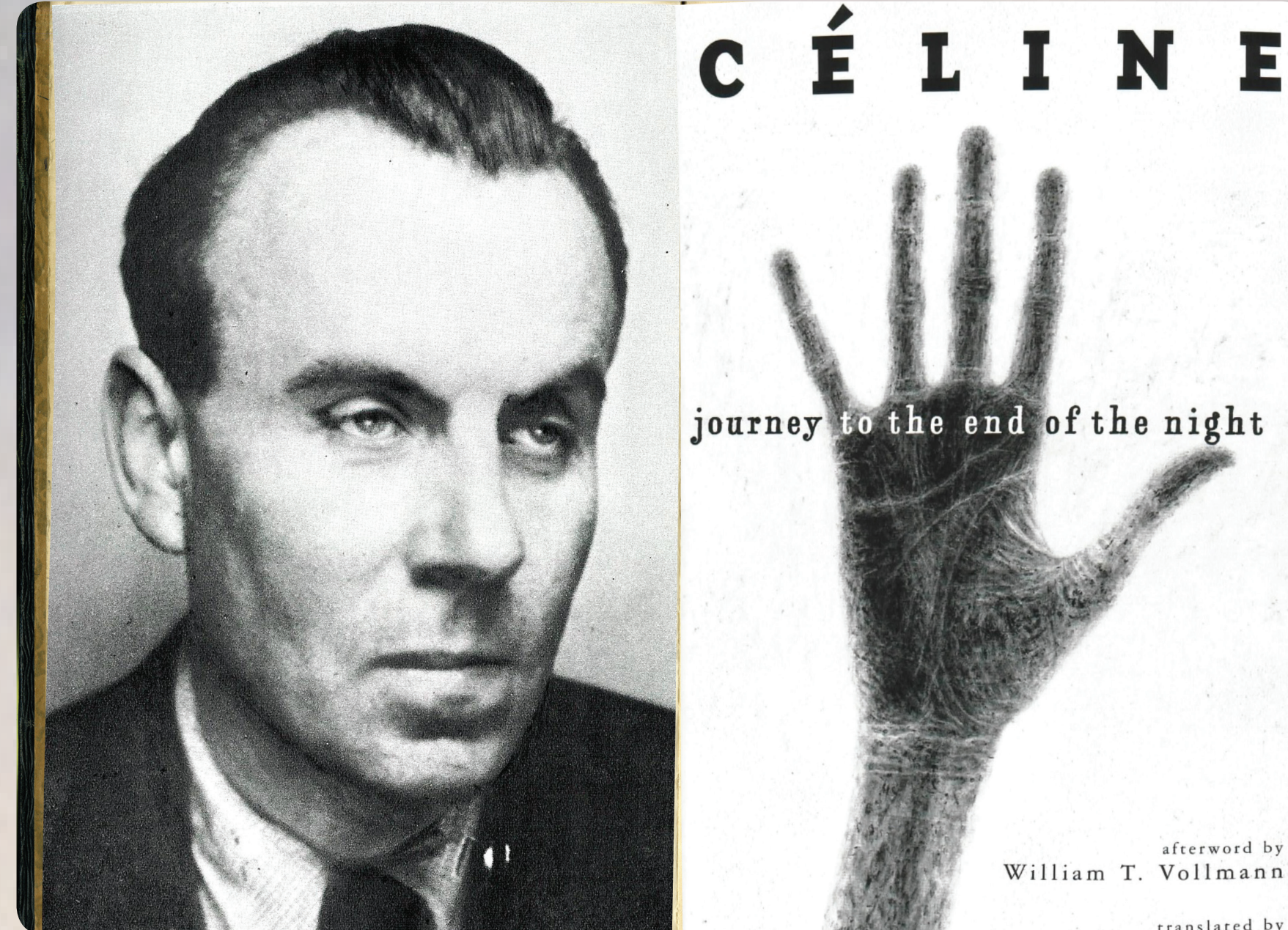
Frederic Manning  
*The middle parts of fortune*



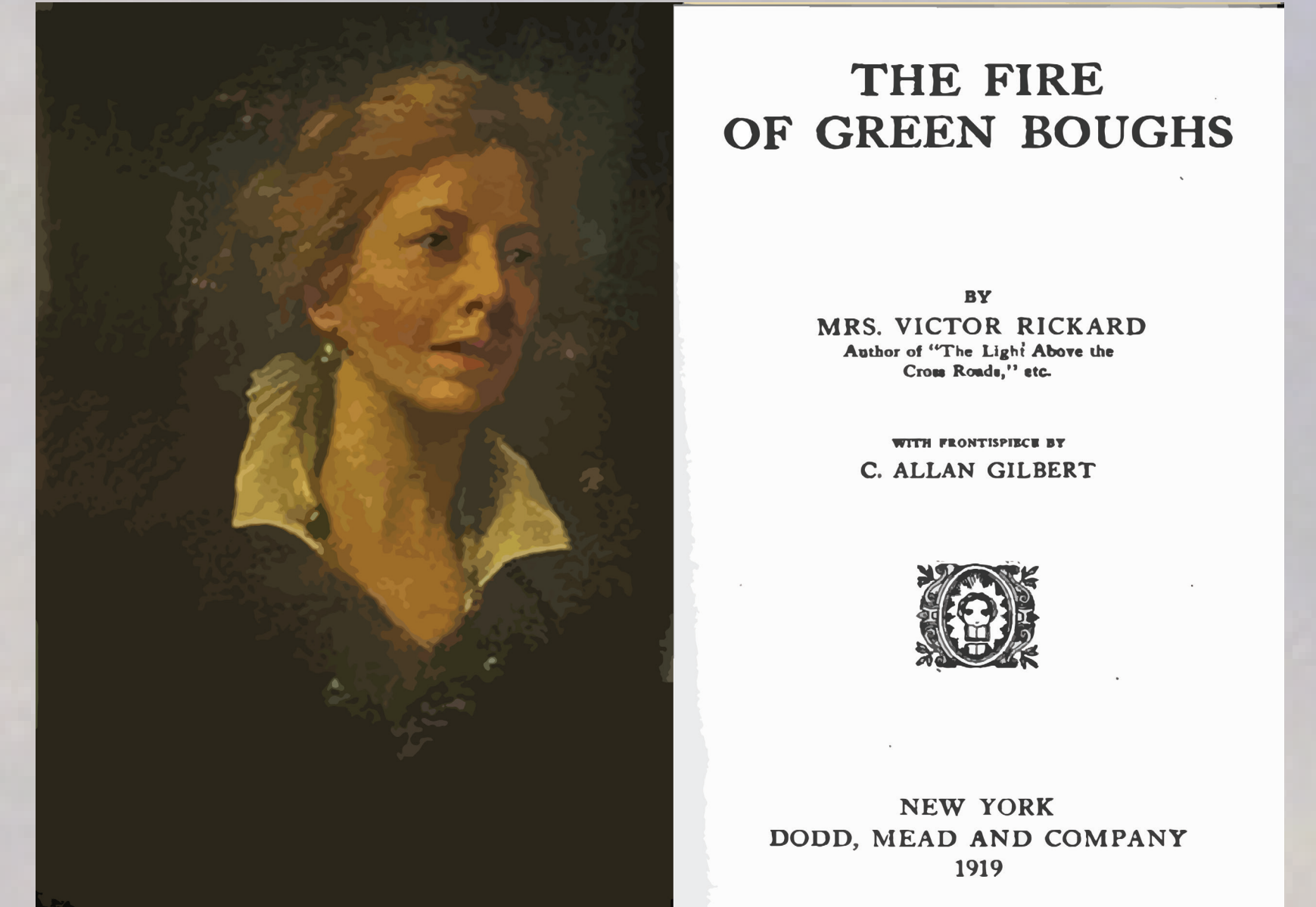
# NOVELS OF THE GREAT WAR



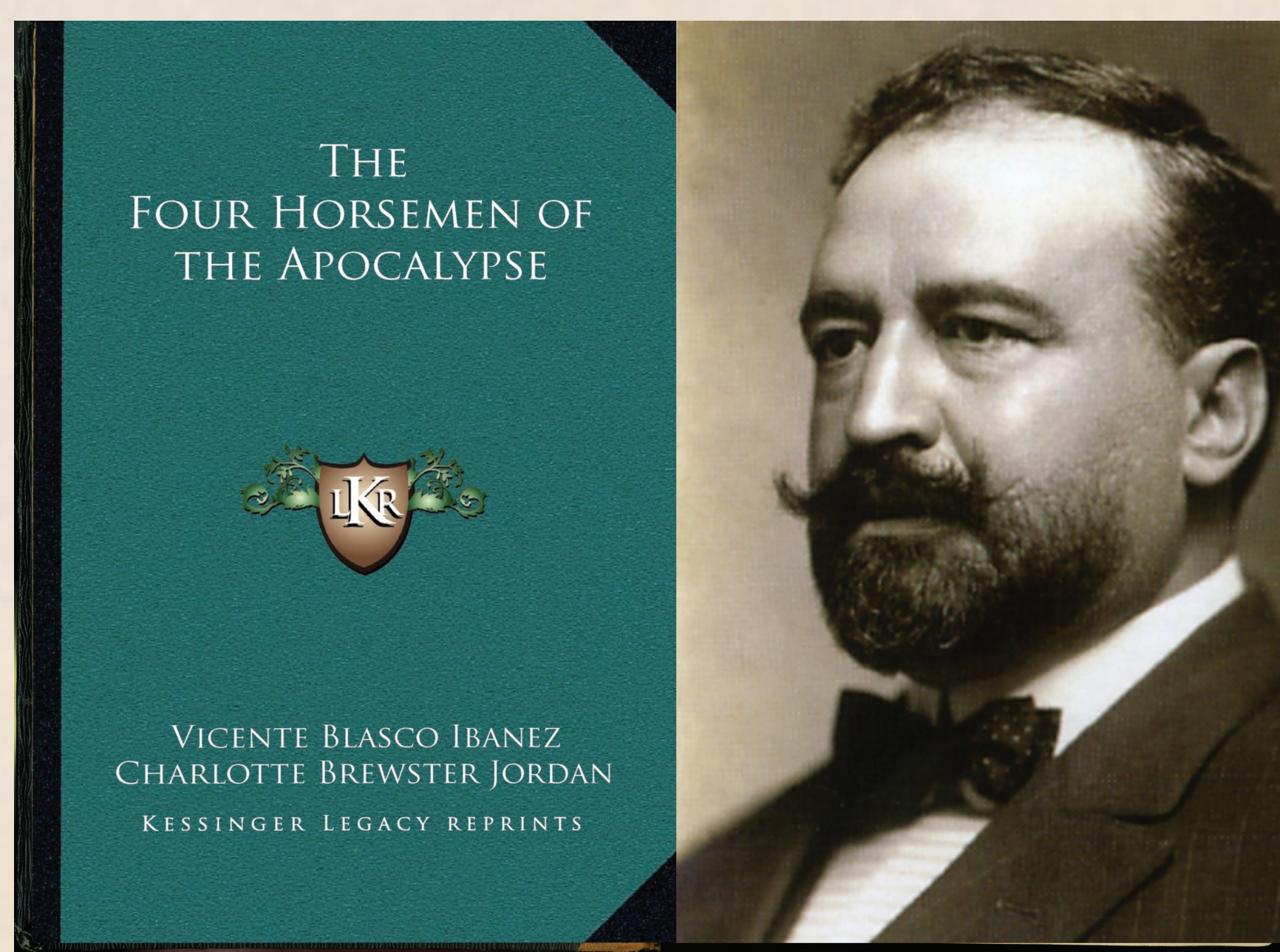
A Russian perspective of the war this novel depicts the feats of the Cossacks during the war and the Russian Revolution.



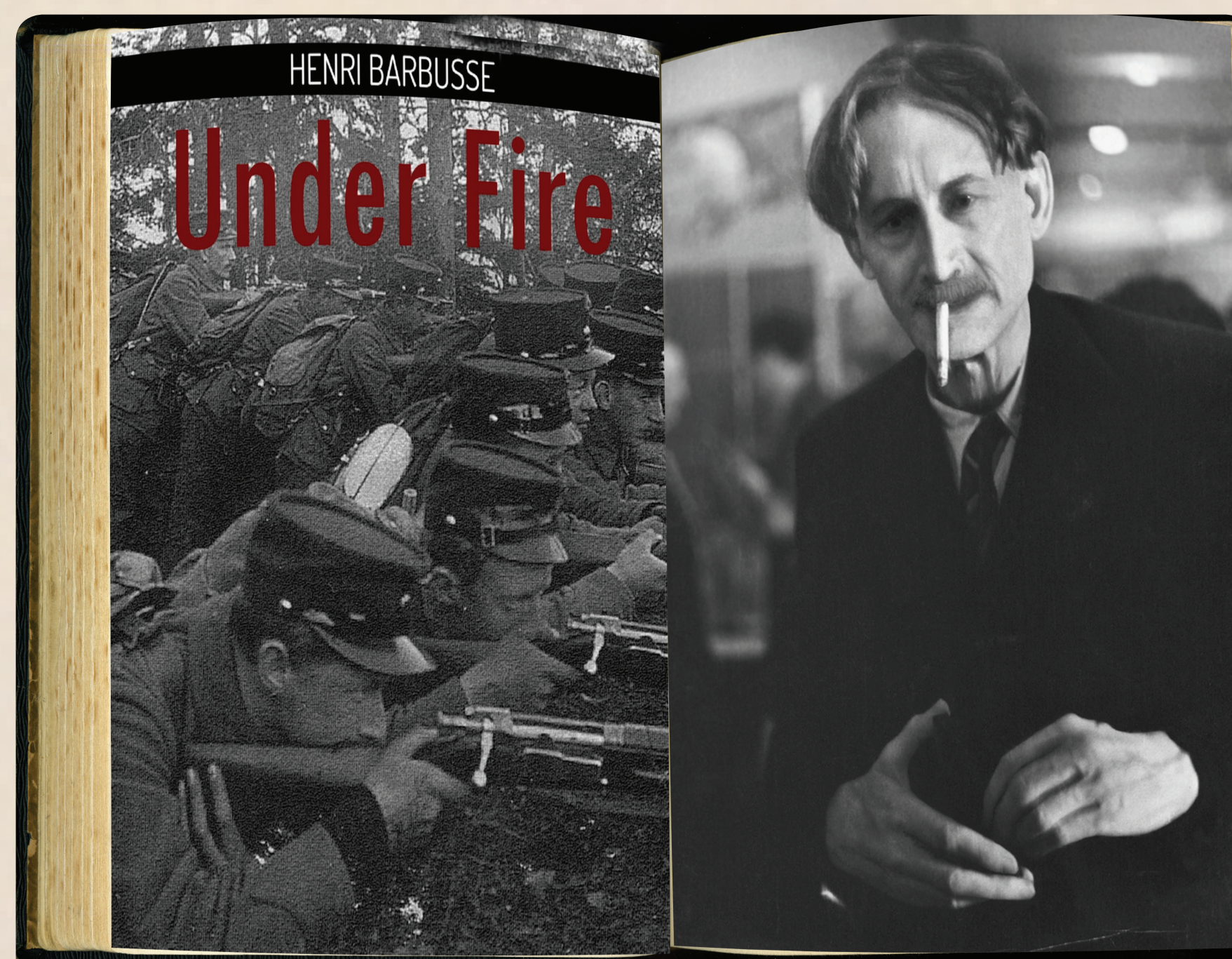
Informed by Céline's own traumatic experiences of the war this novel is imbued with pessimism and cynicism but at times with caustic wit also.



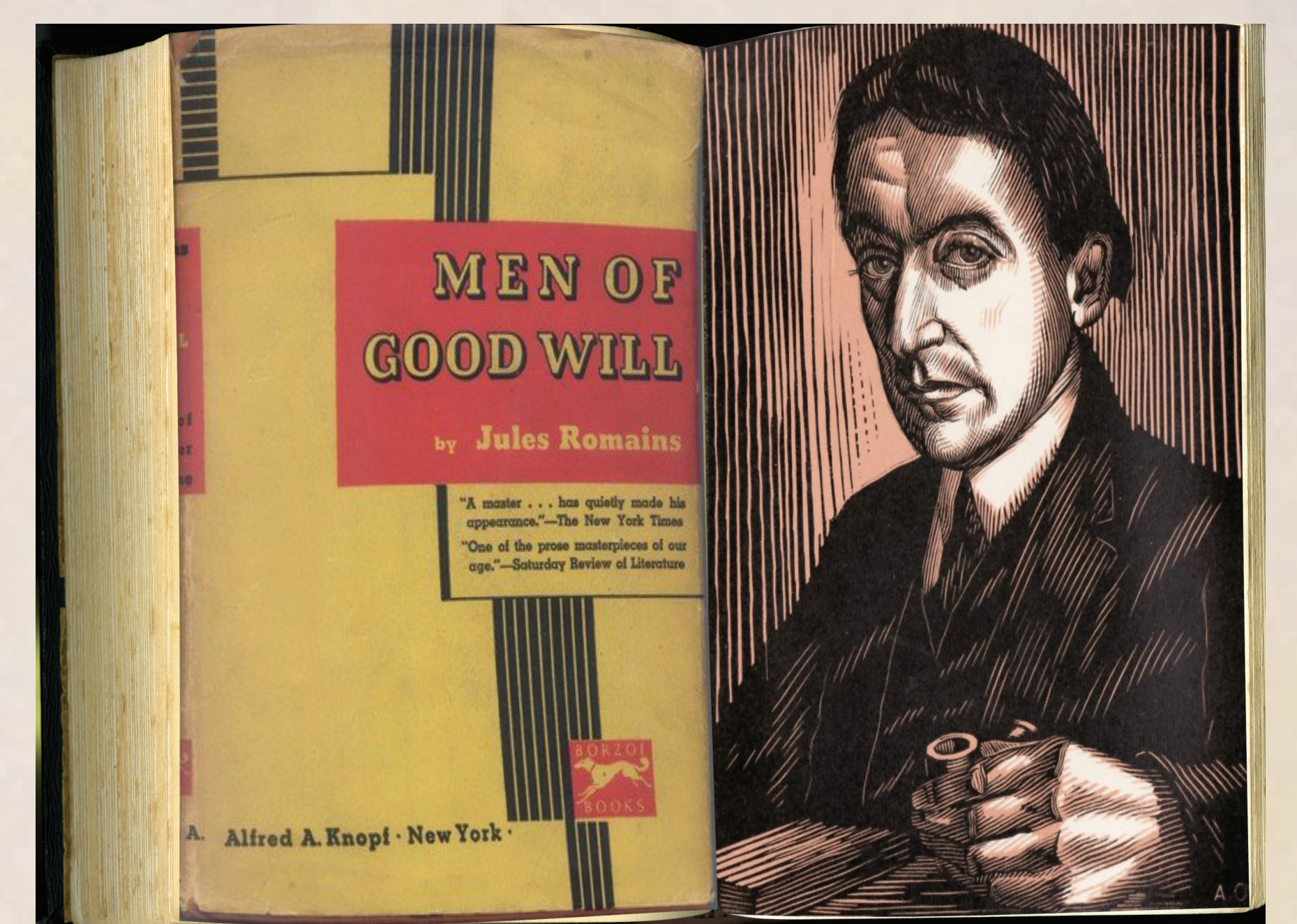
Mrs. Rickard (a Co. Cork resident at the time) explores the effect of the war on the home front and women's war work.



A bestseller when first published in English this novel depicts the lives of a family across two continents, South America and Europe, and the contrast between the values and cultures of both before and during the war.



One of the first novels of World War 1 to be published and narrated in a journalistic style this is a visceral and fierce account of war at its worst.

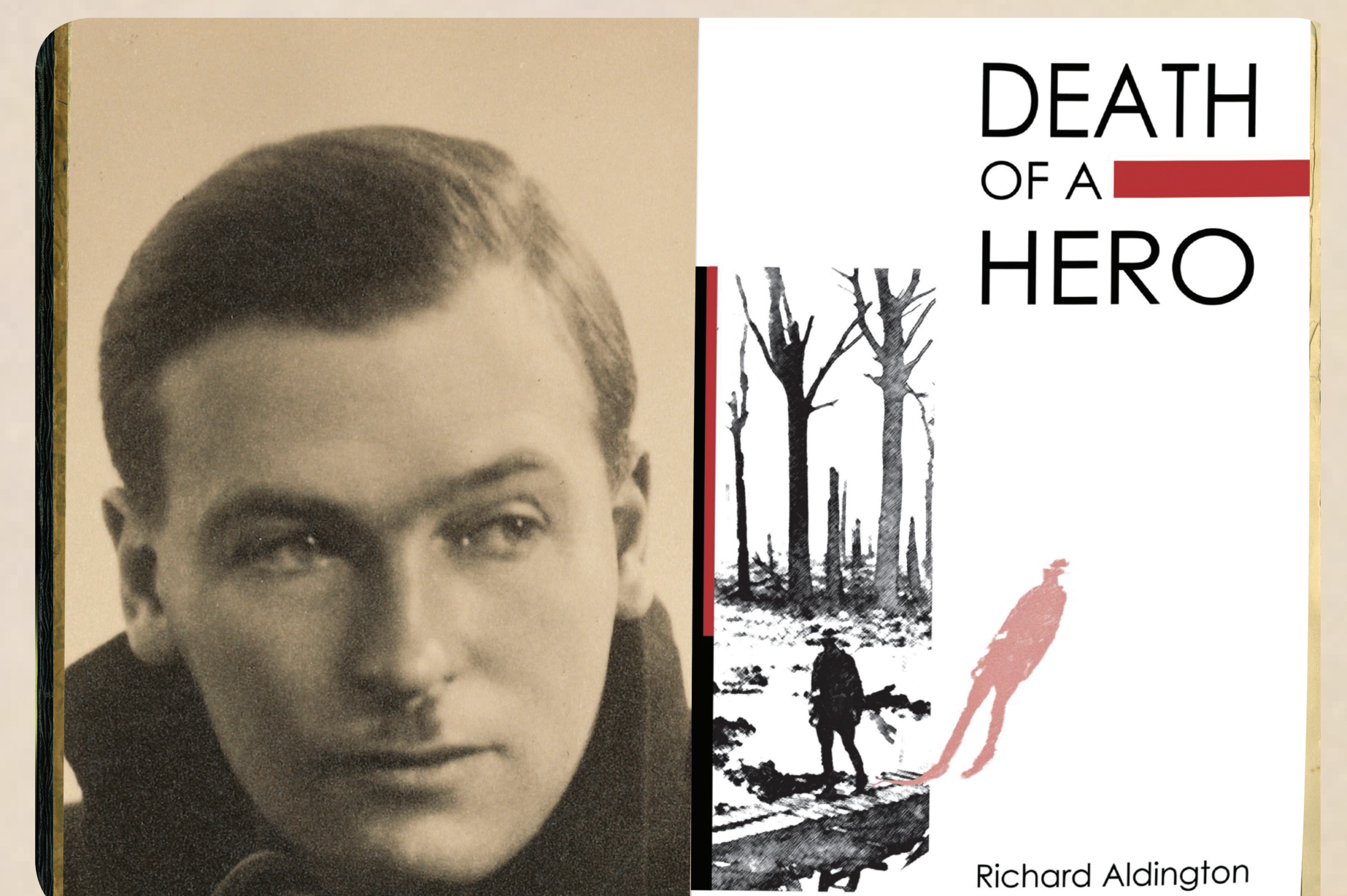
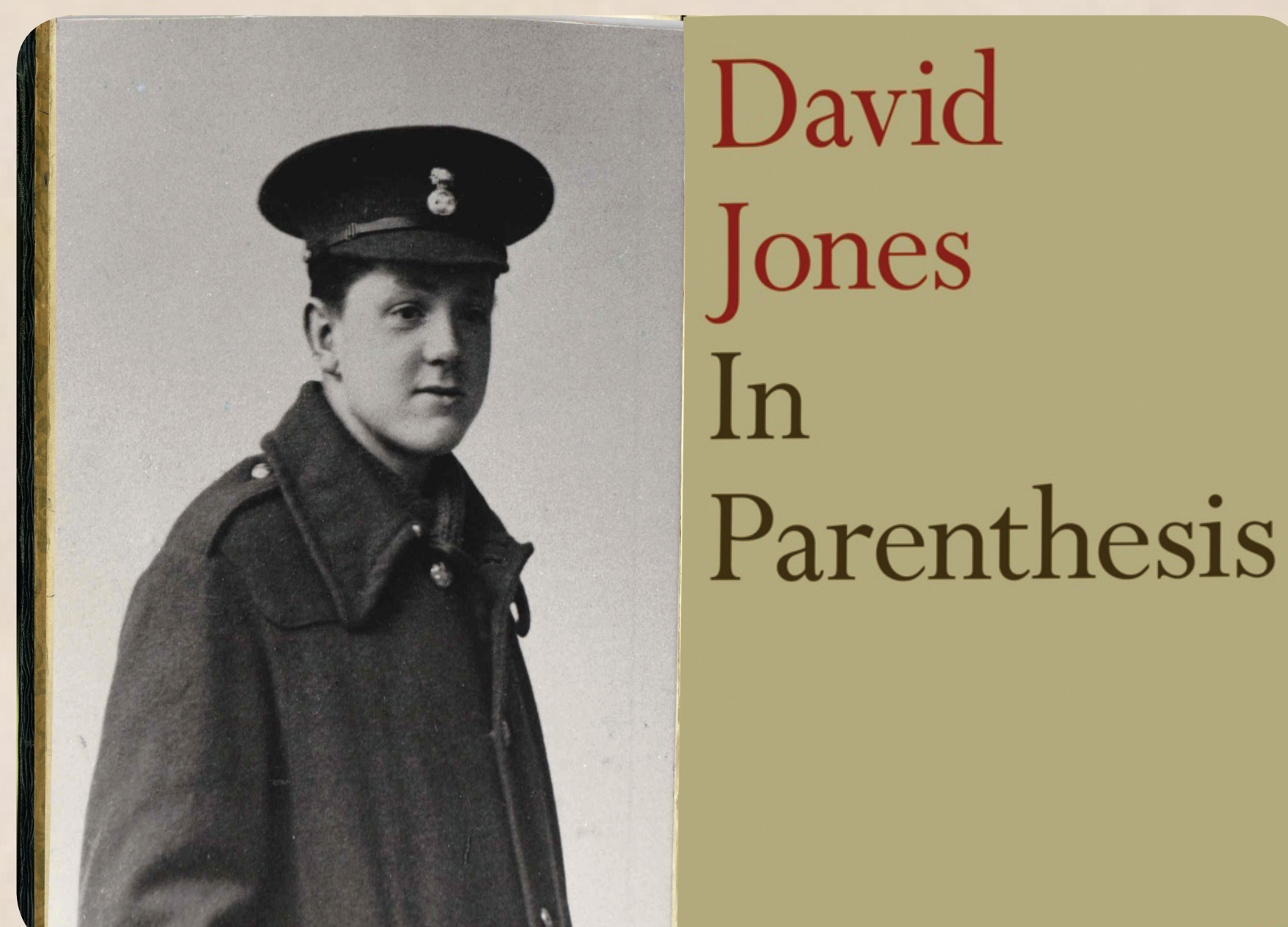
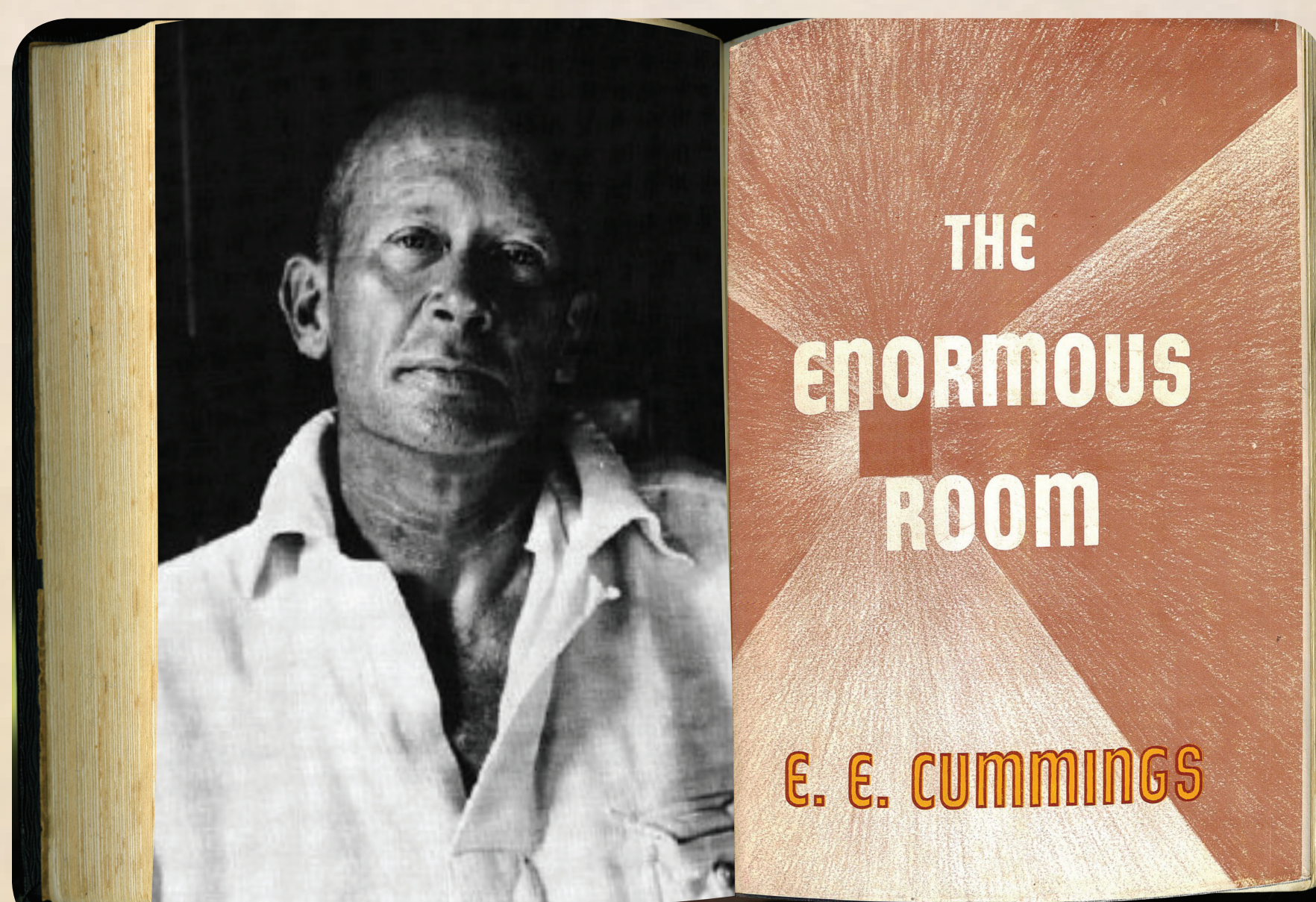


The first volume of the epic series of the same name recreates the spirit of French society from the pre-war years to 1916 and the Battle of Verdun (the theme of the second volume in the series)

Also autobiographical, the title refers to the prison in which Cummings was incarcerated in war-time France.

The epic poem of World War 1 (some critics deem it to be a "destructured novel, not a poem" as it employs verse and prose), the work was based on Jones's experience as an infantryman.

An autobiographical novel set at the outbreak of war, it was subject to censorship due to its graphic descriptions of war and trench life.





# POETS OF THE GREAT WAR

The horror of World War 1 inspired some of the greatest poetry of the twentieth century. Many of the poets forever associated with the Great War were from educated and indeed privileged backgrounds. The reality of war - unimaginable horrors and a life expectancy of a matter of weeks – was shockingly different to how the experience of battle had been portrayed to them.

The change of mood during the war from the flag-waving of the early days to the despair and carnage of life in the trenches is starkly illustrated in their works, in the four short years from 1914 to 1918. These poets were willing recruits, soldiers, witnesses and often victims. Who better to narrate the story of the full horror of 'The Great War'?

The English war poets whose names and poems 'liveth forever' include Rupert Brooke, Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen, Robert Graves, Edward Thomas, Edmund Blunden, Julien Grenfell, Ivor Gurney, Vera Britten, Charles Sorley and Isaac Rosenberg.

Poets were found in all armies and on all fronts – German, Russian, French, Italian. In these panels we give a flavour of some of the best known poems.

## Alfred Lichtenstein

was born in August 1889 in Berlin. He was a German expressionist writer, already well known for his daring poetry and fiction. He died on the front line at the Somme, France, on 25 September 1914, just a little over a month into the war.

### ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?  
— Only the monstrous anger of the guns.  
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle  
Can patter out their hasty orisons.  
No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;  
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—  
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;  
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?  
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes  
Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.  
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;  
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,  
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

WILFRED OWEN

### SONG

As the clouds that are so light,  
Beautiful, swift, and bright,  
Cast shadows on field and park  
Of the earth that is so dark,  
And even so now, light one!  
Beautiful, swift and bright one!  
You let fall on a heart that was dark,  
Unillumined, a deeper mark.  
But clouds would have, without earth  
To shadow, far less worth:  
Away from your shadow on me  
Your beauty less would be,  
And if it still be treasured  
An age hence, it shall be measured  
By this small dark spot  
Without which it were not.

EDWARD THOMAS

### DIED OF WOUNDS

HIS wet white face and miserable eyes  
Brought nurses to him more than groans and sighs:  
But hoarse and low and rapid rose and fell  
His troubled voice: he did the business well.

The ward grew dark, but he was still complaining  
And calling out for 'Dickie'. 'Curse the Wood!  
'It's time to go. O Christ, and what's the good?  
'We'll never take it, and it's always raining.'

I wondered where he'd been; then heard him shout,  
'They snipe like hell! O Dickie, don't go out...  
I fell asleep ... Next morning he was dead;  
And some Slight Wound lay smiling on the bed.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

### DIE SCHLACHT BEI SAARBURG

ALFRED LICHTENSTEIN

Die Erde verschimmelt im Nebel.  
Der Abend druckt wie Blei.  
Rings reißt elektrisches Krachen  
Und wimmernd bricht alles entzwei.

Wie schlechte Lumpen qualmen  
Die Dörfer am Horizont.  
Ich liege gottverlassen  
In der knatternden Schützenfront.

Viel kupferne feindliche Vögelein  
Surren um Herz und Hirn.  
Ich stemme mien steil in das Graue  
Und biete dem Morden die Stirn.

### THE BATTLE AT SAARBURG

The earth grows moldy in fog.  
The evening is as oppressive as lead.  
Electric sparks crackle and whimper all  
around,

Breaking everything in two.  
Like wretched hobos  
Cities are smoking on the horizon.  
I lie, God-forsaken,  
In the rattling front line of defenders.

Many copper enemy birds  
Buzz around heart and brain.  
I stand firm in the grayness  
And defy death.



