

# Le Maudit

By Richard Aldington

Women's tears are but water;  
The tears of men are blood.

He sits alone in the firelight  
And on either side drifts by  
Sleep, like a torrent whirling,  
Profound, wrinkled and dumb.

Circuitously, stealthily,  
Dawn occupies the city;  
As if the seasons knew of his grief  
Spring has suddenly changed into snow

Disaster and sorrow  
Have made him their pet;  
He cannot escape their accursed embraces.  
For all his dodgings  
Memory will lacerate him.

What good does it do to wander  
Nights hours through city streets?  
Only that in poor places  
He can be with common men  
And receive their unspoken  
Instinctive sympathy.

What has life done for him?  
He stands alone in the darkness  
Like a sentry never relieved,  
Looking over a barren space,  
Awaiting the tardy finish.

from *Coterie*, 1920