

The New Criterion

Features

April 2009

An English voice

by [Paul Dean](#)

On the poetry & criticism of Edward Thomas.

On Easter Monday, April 9, 1917, at 7:36 A.M., 2nd Lieutenant Philip Edward Thomas, of the Royal Garrison Artillery, was killed by a German shell at Arras. For the world at large, there was nothing to connect this sadly commonplace addition to the war's death toll with the publication, the previous December, of *Six Poems* by "Edward Eastaway," whose larger collection, *Poems*, appeared posthumously, in October, under the same pseudonym. Only with *Last Poems* (1918) was it revealed that Edward Eastaway and Edward Thomas were the same person, whose death at the age of thirty-nine was a grievous loss to English letters. One of the last poems he wrote, "Lights Out," is spoken by someone on "the borders of sleep," imaged as a healing oblivion, a forest (one of Thomas's recurring symbols) which he gladly enters:

...

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This article originally appeared in The New Criterion, Volume 27 April 2009, on page 19

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