

## DINING ROOM TEA

Rupert Brooke

When you were there, and you, and you,  
Happiness crowned the night; I too,  
Laughing and looking, one of all,  
I watched the quivering lamplight fall  
On plate and flowers and pouring tea  
And cup and cloth; and they and we  
Flung all the dancing moments by  
With jest and glitter. Lip and eye  
Flashed on the glory, shone and cried,  
Improvident, unmemoried;  
And fitfully and like a flame  
The light of laughter went and came.  
Proud in their careless transience moved  
The changing faces that I loved.

Till suddenly, and otherwhence,  
I looked upon your innocence.  
For lifted clear and still and strange  
From the dark woven flow of change  
Under a vast and starless sky  
I saw the immortal moment lie.  
One instant I, an instant, knew  
As God knows all. And it and you  
I, above Time, oh, blind! could see  
In witless immortality.  
I saw the marble cup; the tea,  
Hung on the air, an amber stream;  
I saw the fire's unglittering gleam,  
The painted flame, the frozen smoke.  
No more the flooding lamplight broke  
On flying eyes and lips and hair;  
But lay, but slept unbroken there,  
On stiller flesh, and body breathless,  
And lips and laughter stayed and deathless,  
And words on which no silence grew.  
Light was more alive than you.

For suddenly, and otherwhence,  
I looked on your magnificence.  
I saw the stillness and the light,

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And you, august, immortal, white,  
Holy and strange; and every glint  
Posture and jest and thought and tint  
Freed from the mask of transiency,  
Triumphant in eternity,  
Immote, immortal.

Dazed at length  
Human eyes grew, mortal strength  
Wearied; and Time began to creep.  
Change closed about me like a sleep.  
Light glinted on the eyes I loved.  
The cup was filled. The bodies moved.  
The drifting petal came to ground.  
The laughter chimed its perfect round.  
The broken syllable was ended.  
And I, so certain and so friended,  
How could I cloud, or how distress,  
The heaven of your unconsciousness?  
Or shake at Time's sufficient spell,  
Stammering of lights unutterable?  
The eternal holiness of you,  
The timeless end, you never knew,  
The peace that lay, the light that shone.  
You never knew that I had gone  
A million miles away, and stayed  
A million years. The laughter played  
Unbroken round me; and the jest  
Flashed on. And we that knew the best  
Down wonderful hours grew happier yet.  
I sang at heart, and talked, and eat,  
And lived from laugh to laugh, I too,  
When you were there, and you, and you.