

A HISTORY OF WORLD WAR ONE POETRY

Situating First World War poetry in a truly global context, this book reaches beyond the British soldier-poet canon. *A History of World War One Poetry* examines popular and literary, ephemeral and enduring poems that the cataclysm of 1914–1918 inspired. Across Europe, poets wrestled with the same problem: how to represent a global conflict, dominated by modern technology, involving millions of combatants and countless civilians. For literary scholars this has meant discovering and engaging with the work of men and women writing in other languages, on other fronts, and from different national perspectives. Poems are presented in their original languages and in English translations, some for the very first time, while a coda reflects on the study and significance of First World War poetry in the wake of the centenary. *A History of World War One Poetry* offers a new perspective on the literary and human experience of 1914–1918.

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EDITED BY
JANE POTTER
Oxford Brookes University



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For Jon Stallworthy (1935–2014)
Poet, Scholar, Mentor

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This is a volume about global creativity in extraordinary times. The poetry that was inspired by the Great War of 1914–1918 took many forms and was written from various perspectives and for different cultural and political aims and audiences. In some countries, it has shaped cultural memory of the cataclysm, while in others it remains of lesser importance as a literary record than fiction or memoir. Some poetry of the First World War has also remained in the shadows. The work of non-combatants, especially women, was viewed as having a lesser claim on the war experience, while oral verse forms were rarely documented in publication. Moreover, poets who wrote of a war at odds with revolutionary aims fell out of favour. Thus, what has become the poetic ‘canon’ is a limited representation. *A History of World War One Poetry* seeks to address this imbalance.

Such an endeavour would not have been possible without the expertise of the international array of scholars – my colleagues, my betters – whose work comprises this volume. Their patience and generosity as I navigated the many ups, downs, and distractions as an editor has been humbling.

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