

ERNEST DOWSON

It is late to be telling of Dowson, with the eighteen-nineties nearly out of sight, and yet it is Dowson and Lionel Johnson that I know most of, from the last of this period. Poles apart these two poets are, the one so austere and almost collegiate in adherence to convention, the other too warm to let a coldness obsess his singing. There doesn't seem to be anything wonderful about Dowson, and yet you want to be saying a line of his every now and then, of him "that lived, and sang, and had a beating heart," ere he grew old, and he grew old so soon. "Worn out by what was really never life to him," is a prefatorial phrase I recall. There was a genuine music in Dowson, even if it was smothered in lilies and roses and wine of the now old way of saying things. "Come hither child, and rest—Behold the weary west," might have been the thing he was saying to himself, so much is this the essence of his lost cause.

There is a languor and a lack of power to lift a hand toward the light, too much a trusting of the shadow. "I have flung roses, roses riotously with the throng, to put those pale lost lilies out of mind." Always verging on a poetic feeling not just like our-