

HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL:  
BALLAD OF OUTWARD LIFE

And children grow, they grow with eyes as deep  
As ignorance, grow old and die forgotten;  
And every man goes onward on his way.

And bitter fruits cling to the vine and sweeten,  
And fall to earth by night like perished birds,  
And lie upon the ground and spoil uneaten.

And still the wind is blowing, and again  
We notice it, and make a deal of words,  
And feel the pleasure in our limbs, and pain.

And roads run through the grass, and there are places,  
One here, one there, with lamps and trees and rivers,  
And dangerspots...and ghosts, with covered traces...

What purpose are they built for? these that never,  
As many as they are, turn out the same,  
While laughter, tears, and death change off forever.

What does it profit us? this children's game,  
For us, the ever great and lonely ones,  
Who roam but for the roaming, with no aim,

Nor count the points we round to head for home.  
And still, how much is said when we say *Evening*,  
A word from which deep thought and sadness runs

Like viscous honey from the hollow comb.