

In Zodiac Light



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It is December 1922 and the aftershocks of the First World War continue to make themselves felt. Ex-soldier, poet and composer, Ivor Gurney, suffering from increasingly frequent and deepening bouts of paranoid schizophrenia is transferred to the City of London Mental Hospital, Dartford. Neglected by the military and his own family, and abandoned by all but a notable handful of his friends, Gurney begins a descent into the madness and oblivion which he believes has long been waiting to claim him. Yet following his arrival at Dartford, there are still those who continue to believe in Gurney's capabilities -- in his "wayward genius." For a brief period, it seems that he might find some calm and ease in his life, and thus achieve the status so many consider him capable of achieving. But few of those now responsible for Gurney realize the consequences of their hopefulness. They have no real idea of what he had endured on the Western Front during almost three years of military service and the effects it had on his mind. Ultimately it is not the war but the refusal of his admirers to acknowledge the trauma of his experience that will take him further from a creative rebirth and closer to the edge of sanity that he both craves and fears.

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