

from **On the Phantom Air Ship Mystery: closing cantos**

1913

The luminous object witnessed early last evening
The War Office has declared a spy-craft

Tonight a piercing light
 lit up every corner
 swept up to the hills
Bright lights flew over at thirty miles an hour
 huffing like a faint train
 the squeal of gears a clank of flaps

Rising last evening
 all of magnitudes greater
 than Venus

Before daybreak
 unidentifiable lights
 crossed the Channel

Seen overhead
 sixty miles further
 every hour after

All afternoon
 they cruised west in threes
 streets crowded to see

With sunset
 one's lamp played down
 gone in a flash

From the east
 three came
 to hover an hour

Silhouetted
 in their own
 dazzling glare

Zeppelin

The tram stops
Blackout
A distant drone

The audience rises
To sing
“God Save the King”

One incendiary
Crashed through the ceiling
Went off in the hall

They were in bed and old
Knelt by the bed
And held each other

Another fell between the roofs
Onto the narrow lane just in front of them
But bounced off before it burst

The side of one house
And the Salvation Army Barracks windows
Blown out

A boarding house burned down
The Butcher’s shutters rattled
Neighbours in sheets on the street

Three of them lit up against the sky
Incendiaries fireballs falling
Searchlights and the city burning making a twilight

Hill Sixty

Dawn broke clear over Sulva Bay
Only six oval silvery clouds loafed
Undisturbed by the breeze

At sixty degrees
To us twenty-four
Six hundred feet away

Over the Hill a gunmetal cloud
Three hundred feet high and wide nine hundred long
Not nineteen chains from the trenches

The First
Fourth Norfolk
Ordered to reinforce the Hill

Were lost to sight as they marched
Into the cloud
For almost an hour

It rose then
Off with the others
North

No trace
Or record of them
Ever found