



## C.S. Lewis, Poetry, and the Great War 1914-1918

John Bremer

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The life and work of C.S. Lewis after his conversion in 1931 is well known and his reputation shows no signs of diminishing. His earlier years have not been so well studied, particularly between the ages of 16 and 22 when he studied privately and at Oxford, served in the British army, was wounded in France, entered into his affair with Janie Moore, and wrote and published his first book of poems. To correct and augment the limited accounts of this period, Lewis's life is presented with the general and specific background which makes it more meaningful, particularly as it throws light on his character. The romantic myth of him as a "soldier-poet" is dispelled, largely through an extensive review of the poems in "Spirits in Bondage" and the self-centered life that produced them. A valuable comparison—not to the advantage of Lewis—is drawn with two undoubted soldier-poets, Robert Graves and Siegfried Sassoon. The purpose is not to disparage or belittle Lewis but to show what had to be overcome in his limited and unpleasant early moral character in order to produce the devoted Christian of later years.



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