



Keith Douglas, 1920-1944: A Biography

Desmond Graham

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Keith Douglas was almost certainly the greatest poet of the Second World War. He was killed in Normandy three days after D-Day. He was only twenty-four. His short life was one of contradictions: the gifted artist and romantic, always in love with the wrong girl also enjoyed soldiering and was quick to volunteer at the beginning of the war. The brave and resourceful tank commander with the Sherwood Rangers in the Western Desert, in the campaign of which his *Alemein to Zem Zem* is the classic account, was also an outspoken critic of the military establishment and often in trouble with his superiors. There was always another side to Keith Douglas: difficult, even arrogant, he was at the same time, as Desmond Graham, observes in his original preface, 'generous, sensitive to the difficulties of others, remorselessly honest, energetic, and passionately, innocently open.' Douglas made in his brief life some friends who never forgot him, and whose memories of him have contributed much to this book.

For this biography, Desmond Graham had access to much private and unpublished material. From that, interviews, Keith Douglas' own poems, letters and drawings emerges a definitive biography.

'An almost unqualified success . . . Mr Graham has used his material with great skill and tact.' Roy Fuller

'It is difficult to imagine a better biography than this being written about Keith Douglas . . . Desmond Graham provides us with an astonishing amount of information.' Stephen Spender

'Extremely well-done . . . It is written with authority and it will be standard.' Peter Levi

'Sumptuously evocative' John Carey

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