**Russell, George William (Æ or AE) (1867–1935)**

George William Russell, known by the pseudonym Æ or AE, was an Irish poet, journalist, novelist, editor, critic, painter, mystic, dramatist, nationalist and social reformer. He was at the centre of a group of followers of theosophy in Dublin for much of his life. Ӕ was a central figure in the Irish literary revival. He met W. B. YEATS in 1884 and the two remained friends for much of their lives. He was already eulogized during his life in 1916 by Darrell Figgis in his *Æ (George W. Russell): A Study of a Man and a Nation*, a thoroughly nationalist celebration of Ӕ’s life, politics, spirituality and writings. His first collection of poetry, *Homeward: Songs by the Way* (1894), contains mystical, contemplative verse. Much of his poetry remains in this vein. In *The Candle of Vision* (1918), a spiritual memoir, Ӕ relates some of his visions, discusses dreams, sketches a Celtic cosmogony and develops a language of the Gods. He edited *Irish Homestead* from 1905 to 1923, where he published some of JAMES JOYCE’s *Dubliners* stories, and *The Irish Statesman* from 1923 to 1930. Æ also published articles regularly in the periodical *The Irish Theosophist* and the short-lived *Dana*. He appears in JOYCE’s *ULYSSES*, most notably in a parody of theosophical discourse.

**List of works:**

Æ (1895) *Homeward Songs By The Way*, Portland, Maine: Thomas B. Mosher.

Æ (1918) *The Candle of Vision*, London: Macmillan.

**References and Further Reading**

Allen, Nicholas (2003) *George Russel (AE) and the New Ireland 1905-30*, Dublin: Four Courts Press.

Figgis, Darrell, (1916) *Ӕ (George W. Russell): A Study of a Man and a Nation*,New York: Dodd, Mead & Company.

Summerfield, Henry (1976) *That Myriad-minded Man: A Biography of George William Russell – A.E., 1867–1935*. London: Colin Smythe.

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