

## Rupert Brooke - *The Soldier*

If I should die, think only this of me:  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever England. There shall be  
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;  
A dust whom England bore<sup>1</sup>, shaped, made aware,  
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam;  
A body of England's, breathing English air,  
Washed by the rivers, blest<sup>2</sup> by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,  
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less  
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;  
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;  
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,  
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

### Analysis questions

1. Identify the rhyme scheme and analyse the structure of the poem → what type of poem is this?
2. How many times does Brooke use the word England/English? What is the effect of this?
3. Where does Brooke use alliteration? Give four examples. What is the effect of this?
4. Where does Brooke use personification? Give two examples. What is the effect of this?

### Meaning questions

1. What does Brooke mean when he says there is "some corner of a foreign field that is for ever England"?
2. There are a few phrases that can be seen as religious or spiritual symbolism: "dust", "a pulse in the eternal mind", "heaven". What role do these elements play in conveying the poem's message?
3. Is this an early war poem or a late war poem? How can you tell?

### Personal rating

1. How easy was this poem for you to understand? ★★★★★
2. How much do you like the sound of this poem when it is read out loud? ★★★★★
3. How much do you like the message of this poem? ★★★★★

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<sup>1</sup> Bore = past tense of 'bear' (to bear children = to be pregnant)

<sup>2</sup> =blessed (archaic spelling)

## Siegfried Sassoon - *Does it Matter?*

Does it matter?—losing your legs?...  
For people will always be kind,  
And you need not show that you mind  
When the others come in after hunting  
To gobble<sup>3</sup> their muffins and eggs.

Does it matter?—losing your sight?...  
There's such splendid work for the blind;  
And people will always be kind,  
As you sit on the terrace remembering  
And turning your face to the light.

Do they matter?—those dreams from the pit<sup>4</sup>?...  
You can drink and forget and be glad,  
And people won't say that you're mad;  
For they'll know you've fought for your country  
And no one will worry a bit.

### Analysis questions

1. Identify the rhyme scheme and analyse the structure of the poem.
2. How would you characterise the tone of this poem?

### Meaning questions

1. Who are the people mentioned in this poem? Who is “you” and who are “the others” or “people”?
2. “As you sit on the terrace remembering / and turning your face to the light” What is the person remembering? And why is he turning his face to the light?
3. Is this an early war poem or a late war poem? How can you tell?

### Personal rating

1. How easy was this poem for you to understand? ★★★★★
2. How much do you like the sound of this poem when it is read out loud? ★★★★★
3. How much do you like the message of this poem? ★★★★★

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<sup>3</sup> Quickly eat

<sup>4</sup> = The trenches

## John McCrae - *In Flanders Fields*

In Flanders fields the poppies<sup>5</sup> blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks<sup>6</sup>, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce<sup>7</sup> heard amid<sup>8</sup> the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel<sup>9</sup> with the foe<sup>10</sup>:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours<sup>11</sup> to hold it high<sup>12</sup>.  
If ye<sup>13</sup> break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.

### Analysis questions

1. Identify the rhyme scheme and analyse the structure of the poem.
2. How does McCrae use enjambment and to what effect?
3. This poem is characterised by short and choppy phrases and shortened forms of words (e.g. scarce, amid, be yours). What is the effect of this?
4. The poem is begun and ended with two similar phrases. What is the effect of this parallelism?

### Meaning questions

1. Who are the people mentioned in this poem? Who is “we” and who are “you” and who is “the foe”?
2. What time of year is it? How can you tell?
3. What happens if you choose not to “hold [the torch] high”?
4. Is this an early war poem or a late war poem? How can you tell?

### Personal rating

1. How easy was this poem for you to understand? ☆☆☆☆☆
2. How much do you like the sound of this poem when it is read out loud? ☆☆☆☆☆
3. How much do you like the message of this poem? ☆☆☆☆☆

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<sup>5</sup> A type of flower (=‘klaproos’)

<sup>6</sup> A type of bird (=‘leeuwerik’)

<sup>7</sup> hardly

<sup>8</sup> In the middle of

<sup>9</sup> fight

<sup>10</sup> The enemy

<sup>11</sup> meant: may it be yours

<sup>12</sup> ‘To carry the torch’ means to uphold a legacy or a powerful idea

<sup>13</sup> =you (archaic spelling)

## Wilfred Owen - Anthem<sup>14</sup> for Doomed Youth

What passing-bells<sup>15</sup> for these who die as cattle?  
— Only the monstrous anger of the guns.  
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle  
Can patter out<sup>16</sup> their hasty orisons<sup>17</sup>.

No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;  
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs<sup>18</sup>,—  
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells<sup>19</sup>;  
And bugles<sup>20</sup> calling for them from sad shires<sup>21</sup>.

What candles may be held to speed them all?  
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes  
Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.

The pallor<sup>22</sup> of girls' brows shall be their pall<sup>23</sup>;  
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,  
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

### Analysis questions

1. Identify the rhyme scheme and analyse the structure of the poem → what type of poem is this?
2. How does Owen's word choice in the first stanza mimic the 'stuttering'? How does he use alliteration and assonance to help this along?
3. Where does Owen use alliteration in the final two tercets and to what effect? Give three examples.

### Meaning questions

1. In this poem Owen basically mirrors traditional funerary rituals by their counterpart in war. Make a list of these. The first is given as an example.  
Passing-bells → *the monstrous anger of the guns*
2. Is this an early war poem or a late war poem? How can you tell?

### Personal rating

1. How easy was this poem for you to understand? ★★★★★
2. How much do you like the sound of this poem when it is read out loud? ★★★★★
3. How much do you like the message of this poem? ★★★★★

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<sup>14</sup> A song or hymn

<sup>15</sup> Church bells rung at a funeral (passing = dying)

<sup>16</sup> to recite prayers (such as paternosters) rapidly or mechanically

<sup>17</sup> A type of prayer

<sup>18</sup> Singing groups in churches (often children's choirs)

<sup>19</sup> Bomb shells

<sup>20</sup> trumpets

<sup>21</sup> At military funerals, bugles are often played (think of 4 May on the Dam)

<sup>22</sup> White, sickly tone of skin

<sup>23</sup> Funeral shroud

## Wilfred Owen - *Dulce et Decorum Est*

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,  
Knock-kneed<sup>24</sup>, coughing like hags<sup>25</sup>, we cursed through sludge<sup>26</sup>,  
Till on the haunting flares<sup>27</sup> we turned our backs,  
And towards our distant rest began to trudge<sup>28</sup>.  
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,  
But limped on, blood-shod<sup>29</sup>. All went lame; all blind;  
Drunk with fatigue<sup>30</sup>; deaf even to the hoots  
Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling<sup>31</sup>  
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,  
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling  
And flound'ring<sup>32</sup> like a man in fire or lime<sup>33</sup>.—  
Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,  
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams before my helpless sight,  
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering<sup>34</sup> dreams, you too could pace  
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,  
And watch the white eyes writhing<sup>35</sup> in his face,  
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin<sup>36</sup>;  
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood  
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,  
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud<sup>37</sup>  
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—  
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest  
To children ardent<sup>38</sup> for some desperate glory,  
The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est*  
*Pro patria mori*.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> With your knees knocking against one another (x-legs)

<sup>25</sup> witches

<sup>26</sup> Dirty mud

<sup>27</sup> Bomb shells and artillery

<sup>28</sup> To walk slowly and with much effort

<sup>29</sup> Shod = past tense of 'to shoe', i.e. like they were wearing shoes made out of blood

<sup>30</sup> tiredness

<sup>31</sup> Panicky hand movements

<sup>32</sup> To thrash about wildly

<sup>33</sup> Quicklime, used as fertiliser, is a chemical compound which is harmful when inhaled and burns the lungs

<sup>34</sup> Choking, depriving of oxygen

<sup>35</sup> Turning wildly around

<sup>36</sup> Mustard gas causes chemical burns and blisters on contact

<sup>37</sup> Regurgitated food

<sup>38</sup> Really eager

<sup>39</sup> Latin for "it is sweet and meet (i.e. good and honourable) to die for one's country"

### Analysis questions

1. Owen does not adhere to a strict poetic structure. What is the effect of this?
2. Many of the lines are written in iambic pentameter. Identify at least seven.
3. What is the effect of the enjambment in the lines “if you could hear, at every jolt, the blood / come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs”?
4. Owen uses a few onomatopoeia. Identify two. What is the effect?

### Meaning questions

1. Who are the people mentioned in this poem? Who is “we” and who are “the children” and “my friend”?
2. Explain the lines “dim through the misty panes and thick green light”. Why is the speaker’s sight so altered?
3. Is this an early war poem or a late war poem? How can you tell?

### Personal rating

1. How easy was this poem for you to understand? ☆☆☆☆☆
2. How much do you like the sound of this poem when it is read out loud? ☆☆☆☆☆
3. How much do you like the message of this poem? ☆☆☆☆☆