

## **The Soldier by Rupert Brooke**

If I should die, think only this of me:

That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is forever England. There shall be  
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;  
A dust whom England bore, 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 by the 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.

## **The Fear by Wilfrid Wilson Gibson:**

I do not fear to die  
'Neath the open sky,  
To meet death in the fight  
Face to face, upright.  
But when at last we creep  
Into a hole to sleep,  
I tremble, cold with dread,  
Lest I wake up dead.

# Dulce Et Decorum Est by Wilfred Owen:

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

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling  
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,  
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling  
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime.—  
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 dreams, you too could pace  
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,  
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,  
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;  
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood  
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,  
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud  
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—  
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest  
To children ardent for some desperate glory,  
The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est*  
*Pro patria mori.*

# The Hero by Siegfried Sassoon:

"Jack fell as he'd have wished," the Mother said,  
And folded up the letter that she'd read.  
"The Colonel writes so nicely." Something broke  
In the tired voice that quavered to a choke.  
She half looked up. "We mothers are so proud  
Of our dead soldiers." Then her face was bowed.

Quietly the Brother Officer went out.  
He'd told the poor old dear some gallant lies  
That she would nourish all her days, no doubt.  
For while he coughed and mumbled, her weak eyes  
Had shone with gentle triumph, brimmed with joy,  
Because he'd been so brave, her glorious boy.

He thought how "Jack," cold-footed, useless swine,  
Had panicked down the trench that night the mine  
Went up at Wicked Corner; how he'd tried  
To get sent home; and how, at last, he died,  
Blown to small bits. And no one seemed to care  
Except that lonely woman with white hair.

# The Target by Ivor Gurney:

I shot him, and it had to be  
One of us 'Twas him or me.  
'Couldn't be helped' and none can blame  
Me, for you would do the same

My mother, she cant sleep for fear  
Of what might be a-happening here  
To me. Perhaps it might be best  
To die, and set her fears at rest

For worst is worst, and worry's done.  
Perhaps he was the only son. . .  
Yet God keeps still, and does not say  
A word of guidance anyway.

Well, if they get me, first I'll find  
That boy, and tell him all my mind,  
And see who felt the bullet worst,  
And ask his pardon, if I durst.

All's a tangle. Here's my job.  
A man might rave, or shout, or sob;  
And God He takes takes no sort of heed.  
This is a bloody mess indeed.