

# Dulce et Decorum

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Poetry

Fastaval 2013

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## Prologue: i Peace, iii The Dead, v The Soldier

**GM:** Now, God be thanked Who has matched us with His hour,  
And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping,  
With hand made sure, clear eye, and sharpened power,  
To turn, as swimmers into cleanness leaping,  
Glad from a world grown old and cold and weary,  
Leave the sick hearts that honour could not move,  
And half-men, and their dirty songs and dreary,  
And all the little emptiness of love!

*Word list: Dreary – trælde (om sangene)*

**1 S:** Oh! we, who have known shame, we have found release there,  
Where there's no ill, no grief, but sleep has mending,  
Naught broken save this body, lost but breath;  
Nothing to shake the laughing heart's long peace there  
but agony, and that has ending;  
And the worst friend and enemy is but Death.

*Word list: Mending – heling, naught – intet, agony – smerte*

**2S:** Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!  
There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,  
But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.  
These laid the world away; poured out the red  
Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be  
Of work and joy, and that unhop'd serene,  
That men call age; and those who would have been,  
Their sons, they gave, their immortality.

*Word list: Bugles – horn (udtales bjugels), rarer – kosteligere,  
serene – fredfyldte*

3S: Blow, bugles, blow! They brought us, for our dearth,  
Holiness, lacked so long, and Love, and Pain.  
Honour has come back, as a king, to earth,  
And paid his subjects with a royal wage;  
And Nobleness walks in our ways again;  
And we have come into our heritage.

*Word list: Bugles – horn (udtales bjugels), dearth – nød/mangel,  
heritage – arv*

4S: 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, 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 suns of home.

*Word list: Concealed – skjult, bore – bar (var gravid med), roam –  
strejfe omkring, blest – velsignet*

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

**Rupert Brooke**

## First set: In Flanders Fields

Meditation: The smell of gunpowder smoke

**Part 1:** In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

*Word list: Poppies – valmuer*

**Part 2:** 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.

**Part 3:** Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch, be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.

*Word list: Quarrel – strid, poppies – valmuer*

John McCrae



ALFRED  
LEE



## Second set: Bombardment

Meditation: The feel of muscles burning with fatigue

- Part 1:** Four days the earth was rent and torn  
By bursting steel,  
The houses fell about us;  
Three nights we dared not sleep,  
Sweating, and listening for the imminent crash  
Which meant our death.
- Part 2:** The fourth night every man,  
Nerve-tortured, racked to exhaustion,  
Slept, muttering and twitching,  
While the shells crashed overhead.
- Part 3:** The fifth day there came a hush;  
We left our holes  
And looked above the wreckage of the earth  
To where the white clouds moved in silent lines  
Across the untroubled blue.

Richard Aldington

### Third set: Dulce et Decorum Est

Meditation: The taste of blood

**Part 1:** 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 tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind.

*Word list: Knock-kneed – kalveknæede, hags – hekse, flares – lysraketter, trudge – traske, shod – skoet*

**Part 2:** 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.

*Word list: Floundering – tumlende, lime – læsket kalk (ætsende), panes – ruder, guttering – spruttende*

**Part 3:** 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.

*Word list: Froth – fråde, cud – udflåd, zest – iver, ardent – brændende*

**Wilfred Owen**

## Fourth set: When you see millions of the mouthless dead

Meditation: The smell of damp earth

**Part 1:** When you see millions of the mouthless dead  
Across your dreams in pale battalions go,  
Say not soft things as other men have said,  
That you'll remember. For you need not so.  
Give them not praise. For, deaf, how should they know  
It is not curses heaped on each gashed head?  
Nor tears. Their blind eyes see not your tears flow.  
Nor honour. It is easy to be dead.

*Word list: Gashed – såret*

Part 2: Say only this, "They are dead." Then add thereto,  
"Yet many a better one has died before."  
Then, scanning all the o'ercrowded mass, should you  
Perceive one face that you loved heretofore,  
It is a spook. None wears the face you knew.  
Great Death has made all his for evermore.

*Word list: Heretofore – førhen, spook – spøgelse*

Charles Sorley





## Fifth set: Glory of Women

Meditation: The taste of salt

**Part 1:** You love us when we're heroes, home on leave,  
Or wounded in a mentionable place.  
You worship decorations; you believe  
That chivalry redeems the war's disgrace.  
You make us shells. You listen with delight,  
By tales of dirt and danger fondly thrilled.  
You crown our distant ardours while we fight,  
And mourn our laurelled memories when we're killed.

**Part 2:** You can't believe that British troops "retire"  
When hell's last horror breaks them,  
and they run,  
Trampling the terrible corpses – blind with  
blood.  
O German mother dreaming by the fire,  
While you are knitting socks to send your  
son  
His face is trodden deeper in the mud.

*Word list: Ardours – anstrengelser, laurelled –  
laurbærkransede, retire – trækker sig tilbage  
(flygter)*

Siegfried Sassoon

## Epilogue: My sweet old etcetera

**GM:** my sweet old etcetera  
aunt lucy during the recent  
war could and what  
is more did tell you just  
what everybody was fighting  
for,  
my sister  
Isabel created hundreds  
(and  
hundreds) of socks not to  
mention fleaproof earwarmers  
etcetera wristers etcetera, my  
mother hoped that  
i would die etcetera  
bravely of course my father used  
to become hoarse talking about how it was  
a privilege and if only he  
could meanwhile my  
self etcetera lay quietly  
in the deep mud et  
cetera  
(dreaming,  
et  
cetera, of  
Your smile  
eyes knees and of your Etcetera)

E. E. Cummings



Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori:  
mors et fugacem persequitur virum  
nec parcit inbellis iuventae  
poplitibus timidoque tergo.

**Q. Horatius Flaccus, Odes  
(III.2.13-16)**