

1917

# Dulce et Decorum Est

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.

comparative - shouldn't be so old, connection, ethos

towards death

caesura 5

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.

} semantic field.

contrast - personification almost

punctuation = anxiety urgency

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.

alliteration + assonance

metaphor

15 In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,

He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

} structure emotive repetition, anamorphic almost.

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,

alliteration

senses

20 His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;

simile

If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood

Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,

assonance

simile + emotive

Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud

Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, -

comparative

25 My friend, you would not tell with such high zest

To children ardent for some desperate glory,

} ethos

The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est

Pro patria mori.

propaganda

WILFRED OWEN