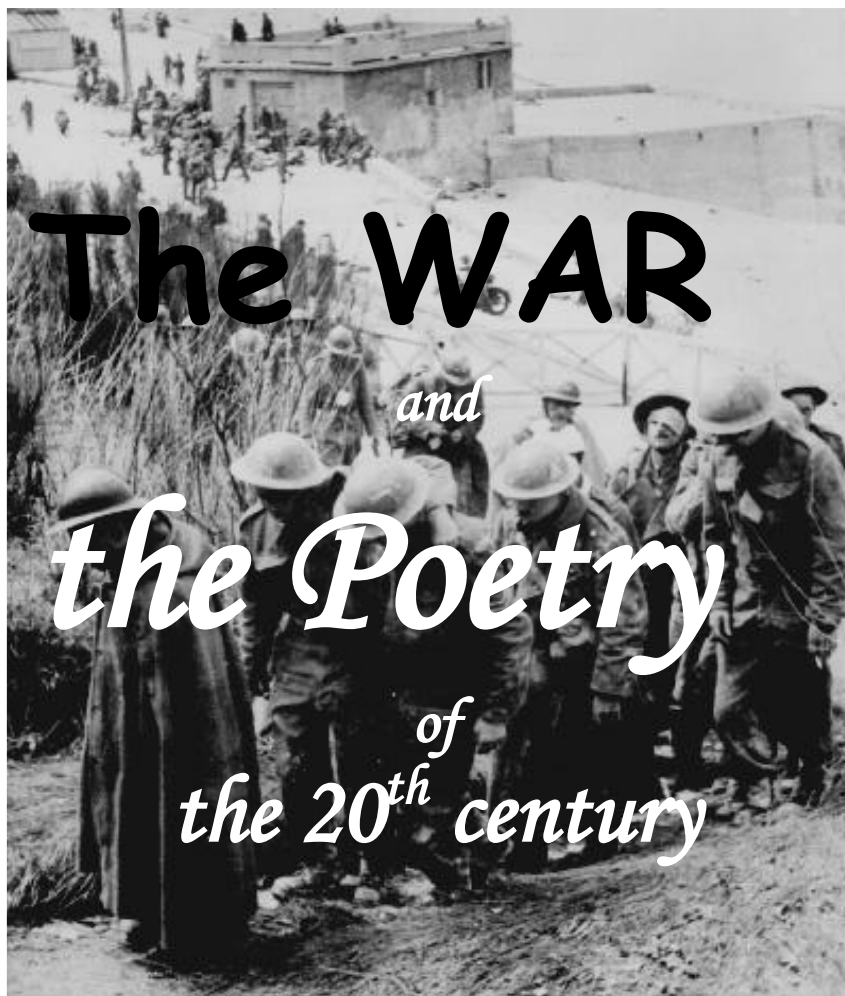


МІНІСТЕРСТВО ОСВІТИ І НАУКИ
ГОЛОВНЕ УПРАВЛІННЯ ОСВІТИ КИЇВСЬКОЇ ДЕРЖАДМІНІСТРАЦІЇ
КИЇВСЬКЕ ТЕРИТОРІАЛЬНЕ ВІДДІЛЕННЯ МАН УКРАЇНИ
СЕКЦІЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ТА ЛІТЕРАТУРИ



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I. INTRODUCTION

As a writer William Wordsworth reminds us, “poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, and there can be no area of human experience that has generated a wider range of powerful feelings than war: hope and fear; exhilaration and humiliation; hatred – not only for the enemy, but also for generals, politicians, and war-profiteers; love – for fellow soldiers, for women and children left behind, for native country”.

War Poetry could be described as being:

- a) Poems which concentrate on the subject of war;
- b) Poems, which are written during a war that seems to have a noticeable influence on the poet.

Of these two, 'a' would be widely accepted by most as a standard definition of the genre. To include poems under the category of 'b' to war poetry is more troublesome. But it would be hard to envision any social conflict, any global changes in the thought and the way of living of the society, which failed to have an influence on anyone living at that time, especially on a poet. Exactly the poets philosophically comprehend a psychological side of the war. They highlight the importance of community between people and at the same time they regard war as an inevitable social phenomenon. There was no ideal, equal society during the human history because it's impossible. So any conflict – struggle for independence of enslaved nations, struggle for rights between different classes or struggle for power between different nations – may lead to the war. And in the poetry war poets, especially soldier-poets describe all their discrepant feelings. They wonder: “... *can this be for real? Can a young man as I be sent to war to kill and die?*” But for many of them patriotism and the ideal of Freedom become a kind of religion insofar as these concepts answer such questions and give them reassurance of reason. In a poem called “Why Am I Here?” by an unknown soldier-poet of the Vietnam war are these lines:

*I'm here to fight for Freedom...
To end the sadness and the grief
War brings to everyone ...
To end a war that should not have started,
To bring joy to the broken-hearted.*

For example, the verse of the soldiers who fought in the American war of Independence is full of self-sacrificing patriotism and trust:

*Freedom...
Is the soldier's cry.
We cherish it, we live it,
And for it... would willingly die.* (The extract from the poem “Freedom”; author unknown)

Death to the families of the dead in war and to the soldier-poet who feels each loss is a personal thing. But bereavement isn't something that ends in two weeks, two years, maybe even twenty years. It's a long and slow shadow. It's a long and slow recognition that the shadow that you feel fell over your life and there's nothing you can do about it. As one poet of World War II wrote:

*He died as one of scores
And on a distant beach. But when they bring
The news to those who count the cost of wars
A private's death becomes a private thing.*

*How strange that war's arithmetic discounts
The spread of sorrow as the sorrow mounts.*

So there are a lot of poems about living and dying, about homesickness and loneliness, about heroism and terror of the wars, about the great suffers. But perhaps the best war poems, the poems that go beyond the patrol and the loneliness and the day-to-day repetition are about Man. If there is anything that would enliven the work of soldier-poets and bring their efforts up to their potential, it would be for them to consider the grammatical first person as a universal "eye", instead of the narrowly personal one. Too often the use of the first person limits itself to present dimensions, objectives and objects.

Someone once wrote: "Poets grow by their suffering". The bloodier and the more horrible is war the deeper and the greater is the experience of the poet.

The war poets, as all poets, brought, to everything they wrote, their education, their life experience, their characters. They wrote in the context of momentous events and intense national feelings. But more importantly, poets wrote mainly in response to personal experiences. As one of the greatest poets of the World War I, Wilfred Owen wrote:

*Above all I am not concerned
with Poetry. My Subject is War,
and the Pity of War,
the Poetry is in the Pity.*

II. THE WAR TO END WARS (1914-1918)

*Woodrow Wilson called it The War to End All Wars.
In spite, it became senseless slaughter that set the stage
For the bloodiest century in the human history.*

Yet, it was more than just a war between nations. It was a war between what was and what was going to be. The “old world” was dying, and the new world had yet to be born. People of all classes and nations saw it as some great cleansing fire that would accelerate this battle and lead to a better world. But, when it was over, more than men had died in the mud of the battlefields. The naive dreams of progress, along with the innocence of the pre-war world, faith in God, and hope in the future all died in the trenches of Europe.

Tony Novosel

1. A Short Historical View of World War I

As the world entered the twentieth century, it carried with it a host of dynasties who regarded their right to govern as a divine dispensation. The ruling classes believed that they were born to wield power, and political decision making, when not in the hands of autocrats, was delegated to administrations whose luminaries were still drawn mainly from the ranks of the hereditary landowning aristocracy. Economies were booming as the result of rapid industrialization and colonial exploitation, and stability seemed to be guaranteed by a complex web of diplomatic alliances, reinforced in many cases by ties of blood or marriage: Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, Czar Nicholas II of Russia, and Britain’s King George V, for example were all cousins. Below the surface bitterness was growing among those unable to share the gilded life of privileged. In Europe, anarchist terrorists, intent on the abolition of all political systems and laws, assassinated seven heads of state between 1894 and 1913. And labor movements, clamoring for better working conditions, expressed their disaffection in frequent strikes. Father east, the resentments grew into forces that were powerful enough to topple the old order.

The threat of the war had been growing for many years. The European countries had formed many alliances, or agreements to come to the aid of one another if war should break out. This meant that if two small nations went to war, even the great European empires might become involved.

June 28, 1914, was for most of Europe like any other fine summer day. General peace and unprecedented economic prosperity had lasted for more than thirty years and seemed set to continue indefinitely. There were a few problems, of course: peace had not produced entire contentment, and wealth, though widespread, was far from universal. There were even a few pessimists who thought that a major European war was increasingly possible, especially since the Great Powers were divided into rival camps: The Triple Alliance linked Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy; the Triple Entente included France, Russia and Britain. Both camps were heavily armed, and each had plans for a potential war against the other. But this was the twentieth century, a time of progress, not conflict. Almost no one foresaw how quickly a war could erupt, or how tragic it would be.

That Sunday, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne and commander in chief of the Austrian army, was making an official visit to Sarajevo, the capital of his country’s Balkan province of Bosnia. Bosnia had recently been annexed by the Austrians and seethed with embittered conspirators who felt some loyalty to the neighboring Slav state of Serbia; that afternoon one of them leaped onto the archduke’s open car and shot both him and his wife.

Within weeks, these two deaths had lead to hundreds of thousands more; within four years, to some 10 million. The action of a single Serbian was to unleash a horrific conflict that would touch almost every part of the globe, a war that was to enter the world’s annals as the

Great War. The victors would dub it the War of Civilization, an ironic title for four years of carnage in which the most advanced nations employed the full arsenal of technological progress to decimate one another's populations.

Almost immediately Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. Germany quickly declared war on Russia and then on France. Then Great Britain declared war on Germany. Other nations became involved in the war – Italy, Bulgaria, Belgium, Japan, the Ottoman Empire. The little war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia grew into a world war.

The nations divided into two warring groups. Germany joined Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and other nations to form Central Powers. Great Britain joined France, Russia, and other nations to form the Allied Powers, or Allies.

In the United States most people wanted to stay out of the conflict in Europe. Many people favored the cause of the Allies, and many others leaned to the German and Austrian side. But very few people wanted American soldiers to fight in a war in Europe.

Woodrow Wilson was the President of the United States when the war broke out. He felt strongly that the United States should remain neutral and avoid entering the war on either side. But a series of events forced him to change his mind. On April, 2, 1917, he asked Congress to declare war on Germany.

In November of 1918, the German asked for an armistice. At 11 o'clock on the morning of November 11 – the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month – the fighting stopped.

President Wilson had hoped to make this war the "war to end wars". He had hoped the nations of Europe would sign a peace treaty that was so just and fair that they would never again want to go to war. But the peace treaty that was signed in Versailles, France, in 1919 was not fair. It placed the blame for the war on Germany and forced it to accept a harsh punishment.

A lot of people capture the view that nobody won the First World War. There were just survivors. That was a war of a kind that no one had ever seen before. There was a host of wars since the Trojan times. But the fundamental issue in most of these wars was resolved at the end of it. The conflict was over. One side was defeated, turned into slaves. Carthage was destroyed, but at the end of the First World War, war carried on. *It was a different kind of war, a war that had no end.*

2. "For Your Tomorrow We Gave Our Today" (Charles Sorley)

We're not making a sacrifice.

Jesus, you've seen this war.

We are the sacrifice.

(written on the commemorating wall in Paris)

The First World War was one of mankind's greatest tragedies – and the poets were those most gifted to express the experience of those dramatic years. Then, brave men rushed to fight for what they saw as a great and honourable cause, only to find themselves in a quagmire of mass murder. The world became suddenly more uncertain, more out-of-control, more dangerous, more godless than it had ever seemed before; and at the centre of the problem was modern man himself, unleashing power and destruction which he could neither understand nor handle.

The experience of the front line war poets was more overwhelming, more prolonged and more intense than for any previous generation of soldiers. Few can be unimpressed by their suffering, their endurance, by the appalling tragedy which was their lot. Yet, in spite of the extremity of their experience, it was permeated by universal emotions and problems which have faced everyone throughout time: conflicting duties, psychological pressures, moral di-

lemmas, guilt, tests of courage, suffering, loss of friends, bereavement, facing death itself, and contemplating the meaning of life.

But the poets spoke of new, peculiarly twentieth century things, too. Men found themselves to be driven cogs in vast, insensitive, impersonal machines, stripped of will, morality, and dignity. They were victims of the grossest abuses by the countries which they served and so often loved.

Paradoxically, many, in finding themselves to be players in highly motivated teams, found a greater sense of comradeship and purpose than they ever found in a world at peace. Even protesting poets with pacifist beliefs were, at times, whole-hearted members of a fighting brotherhood, willing, not only to make the supreme sacrifice, but also willing to commit the supreme crime. Of course, most of the poets showed no grasp of power politics, the relentless pressure of arms industry economics and propaganda, no understanding of causes or cures for the war. They spoke simply as human beings caught up in bewildering and shocking events. As human beings they recorded their experiences and moral responses. They spoke of the problems of modern warfare conducted by “advanced” and “civilised” nations. The poets' words are a warning, unheeded and unanswered. Since their time warfare has “progressed”, becoming more technological, more cruel, more destructive. A man on a battlefield at the beginning of the twenty-first century counts for even less than the soldier of World War I. He is merely the software of battle.

World War I began with great fanfare with long columns of smiling soldiers parading off to war wearing dress uniforms with flowers sticking out of the muzzles of their rifles. Everyone expected it to be over quickly and the heroes returned soon with shiny new metals pinned to their chests. Unfortunately, it did not turn out this way. The war lasted year after year and millions and millions of combatants and non-combatants died. Men lived in rat-infested subterranean holes along muddy trenches that stretched for miles and fought vicious battles that had little glory and much senseless death. Soldiers thought the war might never end and that their children would grow up to take their place in the carnage of the wreaking trenches. World War I marked the first use of chemical weapons, mass bombardments from the sky on civilian targets, the first genocide.

But the war did produce some outstanding poets – Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Isaac Rosenberg, Rupert Brooke. It is perhaps too much to claim that if more people read Owen then there would be less wars, but if nothing else his poems bring home the harsh realities of war and the continuity of human suffering. If literature should not only indicate how mankind thinks, but also how mankind feels, then the poems of the First World War succeed on both counts. I tried to find out how much they represent the attitudes of the average British soldier who, although facing the same horrors, may clearly have had a different perspective of the conflict to that presented by some of the poets.

2.1. “My Subject Is War, And The Pity of War...”

Wilfred Owen (1893-1918)

All a poet can do is warn.

Wilfred Owen

A serious child with a literary religious upbringing, Owen was a shy, intense, and scholarly boy who read constantly and endured a domineering pious mother who urged him to become an Anglican priest. However, Owen did not go into religious life and instead left for Bordeaux, France, where he was teaching English in the Berlitz School when the war erupted. He subsequently visited hospitals and became acquainted with many of the war's wounded. Deeply affected by these visits, the 22 year-old young Owen returned to England and enlisted in the British Army. Owen described his decision in September, 1915: “I came out in order to help these boys – directly by leading them as well as an officer can; indirectly, by watching their sufferings that I may speak of them as well as a leader can. I have done the first”. He

joined the Artists' Rifles and after training in London was commissioned in June 1916 as a second lieutenant in the Manchester Regiment where he is described as being a competent and sympathetic leader to his soldiers.

In the middle of January 1917, Owen was transferred to the hell of the trenches in France where his outlook on life changed permanently. In late April, Owen found himself stranded in a badly shelled forward position for days looking at the scattered pieces of a fellow officer's body. He was diagnosed with "neurasthenia" and evacuated from the front to Craiglockhart War Hospital near Edinburgh where he wrote most of his great poetry while convalescing. Owen was bitterly enraged at the senseless killing of the battlefields and the inability of anyone (especially the church) to stop it. He felt enormous pity for his fellow soldiers who suffered, fought, and died in the mud and misery of the trenches. He was horrified at what his sharp poet's eye saw at the front. Owen started the war a cheerful and optimistic man but during the two years of war he was changed forever. This is all immortalized in his famous poetry.



In August 1918, after his friend, the other great War Poet, Siegfried Sassoon, had been severely injured and sent back to England, Owen returned to France where he longed to return to the front although he seemed to know he would be killed there. War was still as horrid as before, but during an attack during the first days of October 1918 he won the Military Cross. Owen was finally machine-gunned to death at the Sambre Canal near Ors in one of the last attacks on the German lines of the war on November 4, 1918 – exactly seven days before the signing of the Armistice. Owen, one of approximately 9,000,000 million fatalities in World War I, was twenty-five years old when he was killed.

Only a couple of days before the end of the war, Owen wrote this letter after he and his fellow soldiers took refuge from German shelling in the cellar of a destroyed house. They were all in high-spirits due to the speculation that the war would soon be over and the belief they might survive it. Owen was killed not long after finishing the letter:

"Dearest Mother,

So thick is the smoke in this cellar that I can hardly see by a candle 12 inches away. And so thick are the inmates that I can hardly write for pokes, nudges, and jolts. On my left, the company commander snores on a bench. It is a great life. I am more oblivious than the less, dear mother, of the ghastly glimmering of the guns outside and the hollow crashing of the shells.

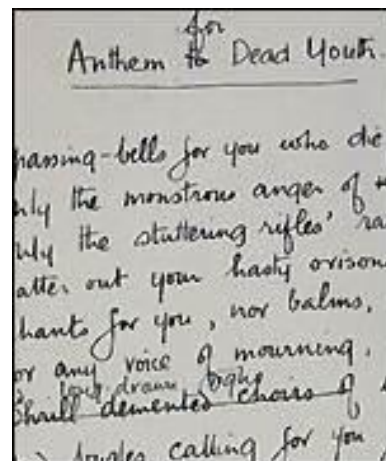
I hope you are as warm as I am, soothed in your room as I am here. I am certain you could not be visited by a band of friends half so fine as surround us here. There is no danger down here - or if any, it will be well over before you read line..."

Owen's use of half-rhyme (pairing words which do not quite rhyme) gives his poetry a dissonant, disturbing quality that amplifies his themes. When I was searching for two poems to compare, I saw the poems '**Dulce et Decorum Est**' and '**Anthem for Doomed Youth**' and wanted to explore them to find out how Wilfred Owen uses language in different ways to warn future generations of the horror of war which he realized in the trenches.

ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries for them; no prayers nor bells,
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, —
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

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 of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.



In my translation of this poem I tried to express the main idea as I see it. I didn't keep the form of sonnet but I adhered to the style of writing.

ГІМН ПРИРЕЧЕНІЙ МОЛОДИ (переклад)

Чи дзвонить дзвін по війнах отих,
Що гинуть, як приречена худоба?
Їх молитовний шепіт до святих
Не чути.

Чути зброї скрегіт.

Та гуркіт канонади — наче смерті регіт.

Не чути сміху.

Не чути дзвонів.

Мовчать святі.

Плач безголосий, без сльози.

Молитву замінила зброя,

Вбивати нею всі готові.

Вже не лякає море крові.

До зброї кличуть з графств
сурми військові.

Свічки запалють погляди живих,

Хоч прийде ніч і знов покриє всіх,

Огорне голови дівочі,

Загляне в їх стражденні очі,

Зів'ялить душі їх квітучі.

Лиш пам'ять вічно буде жити

Про тих, хто зміг війну спинити!

Мій крик про жах кривавих воєн

Я спробував покласти в вірші,

Але сонети вийшли гірші

Від гімну слави всім героям.

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.
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.*

*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.*

This poem is the most anger filled and graphic which I have ever read. '*Dulce et Decorum Est*' is Latin for: *It is sweet and fitting* (to die for one's country). This line is repeated at the end. I know that by repeating a line at the beginning and the end it is most remembered. This line needs to be remembered as the poem is based on the idea of it as 'the old lie' mocking the established belief of nationalism and duty to your country. Also, it is mocking the established authoritative language of Latin that was reserved for the courts and churches. The line is sarcastic as Owen has now himself seen a gas attack and a man drown 'under a green sea', and has found out that dying out there in a far off land was a waste of a life and is completely pointless.

How can it be sweet and fitting to die for your country if no one knows about your death?

The poem tells us that Owen did not like the poets who still used "the old lie" *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori* because he believed that it was not sweet nor right to die for any country. This gives the poem a very sarcastic title, as it is the exact opposite of what the poem describes.

Similarly the line from 'Anthem for Doomed Youth':

'What passing-bells for those who die as cattle?'

raises the same question – **Who cares about these men that die deaths like cattle that are just bread for their slaughter?**

'Anthem for Doomed Youth' is a sonnet. Sonnets were traditionally about love or an epic tale. Owen uses the rigid structure of a sonnet (two quatrains and a sextet) to contrast

with the theme of death and loss. In the title are the words, 'Doomed Youth' which immediately informs the reader that this sonnet isn't a fairy tale or a happy tale of love but is a distressing poem about the boys who went to war 'doomed' never to return.

There is a strong marching beat to the poem and as it is entitled 'anthem', I believe that Owen wanted this poem to sound like a funeral march. And the march is set to a backdrop of sounds from battle. These sounds include: bells, choirs, bugles, 'wailing shells and angry guns' (personification – Owen personifies the guns but the soldiers are not even mentioned. Owen wants the reader to feel that the artillery in the poem was not being controlled by the soldiers.)

'Dulce Et Decorum Est', on the other hand, is written in free verse with an alternate line rhyming pattern. It uses similes such as 'bent like old beggars under sacks' and 'Bitter as the cud'. Owen's choice of language has a supernatural theme. He uses words such as 'hags', 'devil', and 'eyes writhing in a face'. These words remind me of a bad nightmare, but this must be what Owen wants the reader to see. It might sound like a nightmare but you will be able to wake up from a nightmare whereas he is talking about life in the trenches and *there was no way out for these young men*, no way just to wake up. In fact, the only way out for many men was their inevitable death.

'Anthem for Doomed Youth' asks a question at the beginning of each stanza, which it then answers through the rest of that stanza. Why Owen does this is to approach a poem from a different perspective. By asking a question, he gets the reader thinking before answering himself. It causes tension and sadness do not because it is upsetting to remember the dead but because the question implies why should it have been them and not you?

Whereas 'Dulce Et Decorum Est' has the quality of a speech. It starts strongly with imagery and similes. It is a direct address as it mentions 'you' in it. Owen uses repetition of the word 'gas' driving home the idea of panic, the 'fumbling' before you could be safe. The part of the poem which I found the most disturbing:

"... *he plunges at me guttering, choking, drowning*".

This part tells of one of the Owen's comrades drowning out of water after a gas attack. Unfortunately he did not get his gas mask on and so he suffered an excruciatingly painful death. This is so emotional because the reader imagines being Owen and not being able to do anything to ease the pain of the helpless man.

He uses pauses in several places so that the reader will stop and his message sinks in then continues. He also ends strongly which is very important so the audience has something to immediately reflect on. Why Owen wants this poem to be like a speech is because, having experienced war, he has a very strong deep down message to tell; the horror of war is so much worse than people imagine.

Both poems make the reader feel helplessness. There was no way of helping the gas victim in 'Dulce Et Decorum Est' and the doomed youth didn't know their fate making them helpless victims and the reader too is a helpless victim of the poem.

The last line of 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' - the '*drawing down of blinds*' - is the life fading from those who died that day, slowly like the funeral march but ironic as most of the men who died on the battle fields never had a funeral. There is irony in 'Dulce Et Decorum Est' also - the whole poem is ironic. Owen is saying it is not sweet or fitting to die in battle, to be flung in a wagon with your eyes 'writhing' in your face.

Owen uses the idea of irony in war in all of his poems as he saw misery, destruction, and pain and wanted people to be more aware of the cruelty of war and hopefully to stop it from happening again.

2.2. Rupert Chawner Brooke (1887-1915)



*A young Apollo, golden-haired,
Stands dreaming on the verge of strife,
Magnificently unprepared
For the long littleness of life.*
Frances Cornford

Rupert Brooke was born in a well-to-do, academic family; his father was a housemaster at Rugby School, where Rupert was educated before going on to King's College, Cambridge. He was a good student and athlete, and had strikingly handsome looks. Even as a student he was familiar in literary circles and came to know many important political, literary and social figures before the war.

Brooke actually saw little combat during the war; he contracted blood-poisoning from a small neglected injury and died in April, 1915, in the Aegean. Brooke's reputation, aside from the myth of the fallen "golden warrior" that his friends set about creating almost immediately after his death, rests on the five war sonnets of 1914. Some of his earlier poetry – "Fish", "Helen and Menelaus", and "Heaven" – however, shows us a much different side of Brooke's talent and temperament.

His untimely death, his great personal attraction, and the charm of his verse made him a symbol of all the gifted youth killed in that war. His first collection *Poems*, was published in 1911. The poet's most famous work, the sonnet sequence *1914 and Other Poems*, embodying the mood of romantic patriotism of the early war years, was published in the year of his death. These poems continue the boyish idealism of his earlier poetry. In *The Letters of Rupert Brooke* (1968) are found poignant views on the tragedy and waste of war.

Some critics doubt that he would have written the sonnets later in the war had he lived. They show an enthusiasm that most soldiers and poets eventually lost; another poet, Charles Sorley, said of Brooke's poetry, "He has clothed his attitudes in fine words: but he has taken the sentimental attitude".

How Brooke's poetry would have changed in tone and imagery we can only guess. Fair or not, Brooke is remembered as a "war poet" who inspired patriotism in the early months of the Great War. The valedictory that appeared in *The Times* [April 26, 1915] over the initials of Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, sounded a note that was to swell over the months and years that followed:

The thoughts to which he gave expression in the very few incomparable war sonnets which he has left behind will be shared by many thousands of young men moving resolutely and blithely forward into this, the hardest, cruelest, and the least-rewarded of all the wars that men have fought. They are a whole history and revelation of Rupert Brooke himself. Joyous, fearless, versatile, deeply instructed, with classic symmetry of mind and body, he was all that one would wish England's noblest sons to be in days when no sacrifice but the most precious is acceptable, and the most precious is that which is most freely proffered.

One of Brooke's most patriotic poems is "The Soldier". When I was translating it I tried to show the depth of Brooke's patriotism and the magnitude of his sacrifice using different literary methods.

T

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, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest 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.*

СОЛДАТ

Якщо помру, то не біда.
Ти згадуй лиш про те,
Що є земля, куди війна
На щастя не дійшла.
То Англії свята твердинь –
Духовний храм усіх святинь.
Рай із квіток, річок, озер,
І сонячних отих джерел,
Де кожному втамують спрагу,
Слабкому додадуть наснаги.
До цього прагне стражденна душа
І думи про Англію не полиша.
І серце окрилене б'ється, тріпоче:
Забуті і жахи, і темрява ночі.
А небо Англії прозоре і чисте,
І образи щастя яскраві, іскристі.
Я в небо прозоре, окрилений, лину,
Сміх друзів віщує про жаданий мир,
Я пульсом у вічному розумі плину
І рину в повітря англійського вир.

From this poem I can tell that Brooke thought very highly of himself and his country: "*a pulse in the eternal mind*". He believes that for dying for his country would make up for all his sins in his life and he would become at one with god. He believes that he is part of England and wherever he is he is breathing English air: "*...a body of England breathing English air*"; "*...there's some corner of a foreign field that is forever England...*". He says that wherever he dies that place in which he dies will be a part of England because he thinks that he is a part of England and doesn't want anything but to be remembered as being part of England.

Rupert Brooke believes that if he died while fighting for England he would be giving something back: "*gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given*". He is so grateful for what England has given him he wants to repay the favour and by fighting for his country he believes that he will have done so.

I think that Brooke believes that his country is beautiful and deserves to be defended by its people: "*... a dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware, gave once her flowers to love, her ways to roam... washed by the rivers, blessed by the suns of home*". He writes a lot

about his deep love of England and how he regards it as the greatest place on earth: "... in that rich earth a richer dust concealed". Because he is English he thinks that if he dies and decomposes the earth in which he is buried if it is not English the dust which he turns to will be richer than the French dust in which he died.

So the early poets of the Great War were very patriotic. They wrote about how glamorous the war was and how good it felt to die for one's country. Only the poets of later years understood the true horrors of war, the value of world harmony, of a breath that knows no quicker heart beat than that of love, and peace.

III. VIETNAM WAR (1964-1973)

1. A Historical Overview of Vietnam War

*This is not a jungle war, but a struggle for freedom
on every front of human activity.*

Lyndon B. Johnson, 1964

Vietnam War was a military struggle fought in Vietnam from 1959 to 1975. It began as a determined attempt by Communist guerrillas (the so-called Vietcong) in the South, backed by Communist North Vietnam, to overthrow the government of South Vietnam. The struggle widened into a war between South Vietnam and North Vietnam and ultimately into a limited international conflict. The United States and some 40 other countries supported South Vietnam by supplying troops and munitions, and the USSR and the People's Republic of China furnished munitions to North Vietnam and the Vietcong. On both sides, however, the burden of the war fell mainly on the civilians.

For much of Vietnam's history it has been under foreign rule, primarily by the Chinese. In 1860, France began its domination of the area and had, by the late 19th century, implemented its colonization in a number of regions around the Gulf of Tonkin. During World War II, the Japanese government took control of much of the area and set up a puppet regime that was eventually forced out by the Vietnamese at the end of that war in 1945.

After World War II and until 1955, France fought hard to regain their former territories in the region, but with a poorly organized army and little determination among the troops, their efforts soon collapsed. The French troops withdrew, leaving a buffer zone separating the North and South and set up elections in order to form a government in the South. The communist regime set up its headquarters in Hanoi under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh. Many North Vietnamese left the country and fled south where the self-proclaimed president, Ngo Dinh Diem had formed the Republic of Vietnam.

Between 1955 and 1960, the North Vietnamese with the assistance of the southern communist Vietcong, tried to take over the government in South Vietnam, and in November 1963 President Diem was overthrown and executed. The following year, the North Vietnamese began a massive drive to conquer the whole country aided by China and Russia.

Fearing a communist takeover of the entire region, the United States grew more and more wary of the progress of Ho Chi Minh and the Vietcong. Communism had become the evil menace in the United States and with expansion of Soviet rule into Eastern Europe, Korea and Cuba, the Americans were bent on stopping communism from spreading any further. With the cold war at its height, the US leaders were worried that an attack on North Vietnam by the US would create tensions with the Chinese and Russians that would, in turn, lead to a larger conflict and possibly World War III. This created a difficult situation for the US and would eventually lead to many internal conflicts, which ultimately prevented the US from forming a firm policy for the region. The US was also faced with a number of cultural differences between the two countries, and what was considered corrupt by the US government was

considered legitimate by South Vietnamese standards. It was difficult for the US to portray South Vietnam as a hard working, hard fighting democracy; corruption was widespread among officials and the armed forces. The Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) was disorganized due to the low morale of its leaders and their singular interest in personal gain. Therefore the US had a great deal of difficulty in holding the army together in South Vietnam and saw only one solution, that was to start taking care of things for themselves. By 1960 the US began sending their first troops, firstly in an advisory role, which slowly escalated into a full blown commitment.

The large-scale involvement of the US came under the tenure of President Lyndon B. Johnson and his *Gulf of Tonkin Resolution*. Johnson was torn between the differing strategies the US had for Vietnam. The increasing involvement and the escalation of troop involvement meant there were more casualties and more problems at home. But Johnson, who was always concerned about his image, and as president, held the power to halt the war in Vietnam, could not face the thought of being regarded as the first president in US history to loose a war. The pressure around him grew so intense, that he was only left with one option and that was not to run for a second term. Basically, he handed the hot potato to Richard M. Nixon.

The top US commander in Vietnam was General William Westmoreland; he had to face an army full of young men placed in an environment that was totally alien to them. There was no clear front to the conflict and basically, the enemy could be hiding anywhere and everywhere. Drugs and other stimulants filtered their way into the daily routine of many servicemen and morale quickly started to fall. For the first time, people in the US resisting the draft were given acceptance although still not by the majority of citizens. Riots and demonstrations against the war became the norm in the US, with numerous veterans taking part in the efforts to stop the war, strengthening the issue. Finally, the US government saw that it was in a no-win situation and began making plans to withdraw.

After great efforts by the US to withdraw, and the establishment of a cease-fire on January 27th, 1973, American soldiers began leaving Vietnam for good. The North Vietnamese finally conquered South Vietnam in early 1975, totally ignoring the cease-fire and on July 2nd, 1976, North and South Vietnam were officially united as a single communist state. It had cost an estimated 2 million lives and the injury or disablement of many millions of others.

The Vietnam War marked a turning point in the history of modern conventional warfare both in the extent of guerrilla combat involved and in the increased reliance on helicopters, which afforded mobility in a difficult terrain. As a result of more than eight years of these methods of warfare it has been estimated that about 12 million people became refugees. Between April 1975 and July 1982, approximately 1,218,000 were resettled in more than 16 countries. The Vietnam War was essentially a people's war; because guerrilla fighters were not easily distinguished from non-combatants and because most civilians were mobilized into some sort of active participation, the civilian populace of Vietnam suffered heavily, in unprecedented numbers. The extensive use of napalm by US forces maimed and killed many thousands of civilians, and the employment of defoliants to destroy heavy ground cover devastated the ecology of an essentially agricultural country.

2. Poetry and Vietnam

Poetry that documents the attitudes toward the Vietnam War – as well as the origins, development, and conduct of the war – is both pervasive and significant. What characterizes the majority of the individual poems is their specificity. Presenting much more shattering detail than did World War I poets such as Rupert Brooke, Siegfried Sassoon, and Wilfred Owen, these poets wrote about immediate wartime experiences: firefights, the death of a friend, smells of the jungle, rocket attacks, being wounded, seeing Vietnamese women and children killed, corpses in body bags, rape, arrival into and departure from Vietnam, street scenes, the beauty of the countryside, memories of the war after ending their tours, bombing missions,

and letters from home. Brutally frank, much of the language of these poems represents the actuality of the discourse that prevailed, filled with the soldiers' jargon and profanity, often requiring the use of a glossary because of the many references to historical events as well as specific people and place-names.

The themes of the poems are both universal and particularly modern. Many show the horrors of war, the deaths of innocent civilians, the tragic ending of youthful lives, and the general sundering of moral and ethical values. Reflecting the consciousness of the 1960s and 1970s, however, a large number of poems mirror the feelings of all participants as America's longest war began to seem more and more invincible: the sense of loss of individuality, the feeling of guilt at having participated, the impossibility of anyone's understanding the totality of the experience, being betrayed by higher authority, and most often, the anger and bitterness at feeling like what fiction writer Larry Heinemann called not a cog in a mighty machine but merely "a slab of meat on the table". There are also many poems that contain racial and ethnic themes, using both black versus white and European versus Asian conflicts.

Although only a few poems by French writers reflect that country's involvement, the Vietnamese tradition of poetic expression produced a large body of work, both personal and political. Unfortunately, except for the efforts of some American poets most of these poems are not available in translation. Only the Vietnamese expatriate T.N.Hanh published a significant collection in English. His *The Cry of Vietnam* (1968) contains 15 poems about the devastation of war and the horrors inflicted by all sides.

More than any other group, however, American poets, both veterans and nonveterans, in thousands of poems written during and after the war best chronicled the changing, often conflicting attitudes and experiences of people fighting in Southeast Asia. Their poetry ranges from ballads sung by American fighter pilots, and the short, sometimes humorous verses, to immensely ambitious and moving works that rank with the best poetry of the age. Poetry about Vietnam falls into three general categories:

- ◆ political protest poems, usually written by established poets who had not been to Vietnam;
- ◆ verse novels, in which chronologically linked poems depict one person's experiences at war;
- ◆ the hundreds of usually short, personal lyrics that present individual scenes, character sketches, or events.

The first significant protest volume was *A Poetry Reading against the Vietnam War* (1966), edited by Robert Bly and David Ray. The next year, Walter Lowenfels edited the anthology *Where Is Vietnam?*, in which the 87 contributing poets include James Dickey, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and Denise Levertov. Two more collections followed: *Out of the Shadow of War* (1968) and *Poetry against the War* (1972). Although a few poems are set in Southeast Asia, most of the works presented in these anthologies reflect the writers' attitudes to U.S. involvement in Vietnam by references to the political scene, and to antiwar themes in general. These anthologies and the numerous individual poems that were published served to define and sustain the general intellectual opposition to the war.

The movement from innocence to experience was perhaps the most universal theme explored by American poets who usually tell anti-heroic stories which assert the moral ambiguity of America's involvement in Vietnam and deflate notions of patriotism or glory sometimes associated with war. In fact, many of these accounts emphasize the difference between Vietnam and wars such as WWII. Not only did America's involvement in WWII seem more morally justified than involvement in Vietnam, but the War in Vietnam was fought differently as well. A guerilla war, American soldiers found themselves in unfamiliar, jungle terrain. There were no clear arenas of battle; many were killed in ambushes, sniper attacks, and by bombs connected to trip wires. In addition, American soldiers had difficulty in distinguishing the enemy – the Vietcong – from South Vietnamese loyalists, a predicament adding tension and fear to everyday life. They enlisted, expecting a heroic experience, but were forever

changed by the war's realities. The poetry they convey is frequently brutally graphic and shocking, relating atrocities committed both by the Vietcong and by American soldiers themselves. For the most part, however, these accounts do not blame ordinary soldiers for sometimes horrific behavior. The ordinary soldier is usually presented, instead, as someone at the mercy of forces greater than himself, as the victim of a bungled American policy in Vietnam, of uncaring or glory-seeking officers and politicians, or of the natural and tragic hardening that would take place in anyone exposed to brutality.

There is none like a soldier-poet. He's there, in a foreign country thousands of miles from home, with War or maybe it's Death or Loneliness or Love or Hope doing the interrogating, racking his mind. He may or may not find any answers, but the verse he pens at least attenuates those questions and conflicts tormenting him. It is a cry for support, a cry to his fellow man for compassion for the men dying regardless of why:

Take a man, then put him alone.

Put him 12,000 miles from home.

Empty his heart of all but blood.

Make him live in sweat and mud. ("Living and Dying" by an unknown author)

However, there are a lot of poets who didn't fight at war and it doesn't mean that they haven't experienced it. They have seen a war, they lost relatives and friends in it. They know what fear and helplessness are and understand the true horrible essence of war. All these feelings and unanswerable questions compel them to speak, and their poetry isn't less emotional or less convincing than the works of the soldier-poets. Maybe it's a bit different, because war is a disaster for civilians, it turns upside-down their lives and makes them suffer. But for soldier war is a part of his reality, of his everyday life, and that's why he understands the meaning of things in a different way that civilian-poet does.

Such authors as Denise Levertov, Allen Ginsberg, Robert Bly, Robert Lowell, W.S. Merwin, W.D. Ehrhart are among the American poets that responded to the human suffering in Vietnam and induced to stop that terrifying fratricide.

Denise Levertov sees war as ultimate unreason and disorder, as the violation of the innate order at the heart of things. In the 1960s Levertov was galvanized into political action by the Vietnam War (prior to this war she had worked in the anti-nuclear movement). She organized advertisements in *The New York Times* headed *Writers and Artists Protest the War in Vietnam*. She eventually traveled to Hanoi in North Vietnam.



A poem published in 1967, **Life at War**, expresses the horror of knowing that a war is going on, a war perpetrated by her own species, which is otherwise capable of such fine things.

"Nothing we do has the quickness, the sureness,

the deep intelligence living at peace would have", – she says regretfully. Her word

choice never seems haphazard, for all the seeming randomness of some of her line breaks and line lengths. Levertov's pre-Vietnam poetry shows us a capable and confident woman and poet avidly "reading" the world as she moves through experience. That world could be coped with and understood, and beauty lay along the path. She found it all satisfactory. But war will not lie down to the imagination. It casts a shadow on all the other goings. One carries the war about as a burden. War in *Life at War* seems to have a slightly wider extension than Vietnam:

We have breathed the grits of it in, all our lives,

our lungs are pocked with it,

the mucous membrane of our dreams

coated with it, the imagination

filmed over with the gray filth of it...

Denise Levertov (1923-1997)

Vietnam is obviously the real sore: our *"nerve filaments twitch with its presence"*. It is perhaps not without significance that the choice of images directly or indirectly relates to the making of poetry: lungs, dreams, imagination, breath. One fact is apparent: evil has been encountered by Levertov in a way it had not been encountered before, and the effect has been profound. "Life at War" shows it even in the image of raw dough, I don't mention the descriptions of carnage.



The similar senses of blight, weakness, anger and despair find expression in the works of Robert Bly. Although Bly writes poems of political protest, he does want to believe that the American ideals of peace and liberty were articulated in good faith and can be achieved. While peace and freedom are universal ideals, the pursuit of happiness and the ideals of equality have a particular political and moral resonance in America. The betrayal of these founding ideals creates an acute sense of loss and anger. 'When shall I have peace?' is similar to Ginsberg's appeal: 'America when will you be angelic?' The intrusion of the singular 'I' indicates a greater sense of a personal burden than in Ginsberg and, unlike him, Bly has a deep sense of despair. As poet and seer, delving

into personal and political consciousness, he can only see decay. Bly, like Ginsberg, is acutely aware of the power of language (and the way it was wielded in the course of the war), the problem of truth (the emphasis on lies and lying in the poems discussed is evident), and the importance of poetic dissent. When they take on the role of moral arbiter, they articulate anti war representations which are as absolute and fundamental in their assertions as government speak.

"Though first heard as a powerful antiwar poem, "The Teeth Mother Naked at Last" by Robert Bly protested much of American culture from the vantage point of objecting to our nation's efforts in Vietnam. However, like most great poems, "The Teeth Mother Naked at Last" is about more than it first seems to concern. When Bly published this poem in 1973, the United States of America was fiercely involved in many conflicts. In addition to the war and antiwar movement, our country was deeply divided with many of the racial, religious, and economic "wars" that still exist today. One way to interpret our involvement with Viet Nam is to see the story of how young Americans woke up and rose to great moral heights to stop the military decisions of its elder leaders. This extract from "The Teeth Mother Naked at Last" is a part of a legacy of protest learned from our country's birth and remembered in time to avoid further death and destruction in the 1970s"¹:

Artillery shells explode. Napalm canisters roll end
over end.

800 steel pellets fly through the vegetable walls.

The six-hour infant puts his fists instinctively
to his eyes to keep out the light.

But the room explodes,
the children explode.

Blood leaps on the vegetable walls.

Yes, I know, blood leaps on the walls –

Don't cry at that –

Do you cry at the wind pouring out of Canada?

Do you cry at the reeds shaken at the edge of
the sloughs?

The Marine battalion enters.

¹ Will Hochman "Poem Still Burning"

This happens when the seasons change,
 This happens when the leaves begin to drop from the
 trees too early.
"Kill them: I don't want to see anything moving."
 This happens when the ice begins to show its teeth in
 the ponds,
 This happens when the heavy layers of lake water press
 down on the fish's head, and send him deeper, where
 his tail swirls slowly, and his brain passes him
 pictures of heavy reeds, of vegetation fallen
 on vegetation. . . .

At that time Americans were realizing that they were not only misdirected by wrong-headed military leaders, but that many of their leaders simply didn't understand our people's need to find more racial and religious harmony, to establish more economic fairness:

The ministers lie, the professors lie, the television lies,
 the priests lie. . . .
 These lies mean that the country wants to die.
 [...]
 First the President lies about the date the Appalachian
 Mountains rose.
 Then he lies about the population of Chicago, then he lies
 about the weight of the adult eagle, then about the
 acreage of the Everglades.
 [...]
 And the Attorney General lies about the time the
 sun sets.

"*The Teeth Mother Naked at Last* was not only one of the best antiwar poems of its time, but was also one of the most effective expressions of dissent and criticism of American culture since Allen Ginsberg published "Howl" in 1956. As we re-read *The Teeth Mother Naked at Last* we might ask ourselves if Bly's protest still needs to be heard? Are our children still burning? Are our leaders still making decisions that bring too much suffering? Does poetry still uncover hidden meaning decades after its words are written?"²

3. The Thing Called Vietnam (Thomas G. Bowie)

*And no moves left for me at all but to write down
 some few last words and make the dispersion
 Vietnam Vietnam Vietnam, we've all been there.
 Michael Herr, Dispatches*

In the twenty-five years since Michael Herr made his final moves in a few last words, much has changed. His 1977 sentiment that "we've all been there," that Vietnam was in both a metaphoric and realistic sense a part of all of us, was an accurate generalization. When *Dispatches* was published, we had lived with Vietnam – nightly in our living rooms on the evening news, as soldiers in the field and protesters in the street, as a matter of dubious foreign policy, and as the chief cause of domestic strife – for at least a decade, perhaps for two. In 1977, we had all been there; yet even today, despite the many changes in our world and our

² Will Hochman "Poem Still Burning"

best efforts to sort out the aftermath of this painful, problematic, and perhaps pointless conflict, many are still haunted by the legacy of Vietnam.

It's a tough legacy to shake. How do we reconcile ourselves with the over 58,000 names on a black granite wall in Washington, DC? With the hundreds of thousands of combatants who were physically, psychologically, or emotionally devastated by the war? Or with the over 2 million Vietnamese who died fighting us? How do we reconcile ourselves with veterans who returned to demonstrate against the war they endured, presidents and generals who may have been derelict in their duty, and secretaries of defense who confess, in retrospect, that it was a tragic mistake, that "we were wrong, terribly wrong," and that "we often did not have time to think straight"? What lessons do we still have to learn, and why won't "that war" just go away?

Wounds heal slowly, memories endure, and now thirty years distant from Vietnam we're still struggling, both as individuals and as a nation, to reconcile ourselves with Vietnam. Yet fewer of us "have been there" today, fewer of us have the vivid personal memories associated with that searing moment in American history we call Vietnam. Today we instead live with the aftermath of the war, with the memories and stories that have mapped the legacy of Vietnam, that have come to stand for Vietnam. As Donald Anderson, in his introduction to an anthology of post-Vietnam stories *Aftermath* suggests:

"These stories are... about memory and love and resentment and loss and disbelief and defiance and humiliation and earnestness and blame and shame and blood and sacrifice and courage and sorrow. These are stories that, even if set in a past, seem to be written in an urgent and immortal present. Such stories are about what we must live with after any fought war, soldier or no. They identify us, these stories. *They are about us*".

I believe he's right – the stories, often told in poetry, continue to identify us because they are fundamentally about us. The millions of soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, nurses, correspondents, and others created their own stories in response to this thing we call Vietnam. They're about us because their stories continue to intersect with our lives in countless uncharted ways. And, most of all, because they're about us, we must hear them. Poets, novelists, essayists, Vietnamese and American, wives and families, prisoners of war, veterans and critics of the war . . . each invites us to listen to his story, and to listen carefully. "*Vietnam Vietnam Vietnam, we've all been there*" because they have told their stories, because we listen, and because, finally, they are about us.

IV. WORLD WAR II (1939-1945)

1. The Most Devastating War in Human History

*If we open a quarrel between the past and the present,
we shall find that we have lost the future.*

Winston Churchill

The Second World War was a war of extremes. All the powers that fought it were pushed to the very depths of physical and moral endurance. Not since the European wars of religion three centuries before had ideological confrontation provoked such a depth of hatred and military barbarism. More than any previous war, World War II involved the commitment of nations' entire human and economic resources, the blurring of the distinction between combatant and non-combatant, and the expansion of the battlefield to include all of the enemy's territory.

It was also a war of extraordinary contrasts. On the Eastern Front both sides fought with large tank armies, but at times reverted to fighting on horseback. In August 1942 two squadrons of Italian cavalry performed their country's last mounted charge, with sabres drawn, against a Soviet infantry division. In the Far East Japanese soldiers fought with knives and the long *samurai* sword side by side with machine-guns. Biplanes saw service throughout a war that generated the first rockets, the first intercontinental bombers, and, at its very end, the first nuclear weapons. Women and children fought in uniform alongside men; 12-year-old boys were drafted into the final frantic defence of the German homeland; regiments of Soviet women fought in the Red Army's advance on Berlin. Hundreds of thousands of women and children died in the front line of the air war in the bombing of Germany and Japan. It was also unique in modern times for the savagery of the military attacks unleashed against civilians, and for the adoption by Nazi Germany of genocide (of Jews, Gypsies, and other groups) as a specific war aim. The most important determinants of its outcome were industrial capacity and personnel. In the last stages of the war, two radically new weapons were introduced: the long-range rocket and the atomic bomb. In the main, however, the war was fought with the same or improved weapons of the types used in World War I. The greatest advances were in aircraft and tanks.

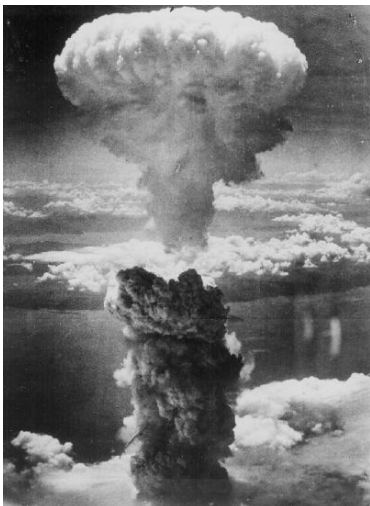
World War II in terms of lives lost and material destruction, was the most devastating war in human history. It began in 1939 as a European conflict between Germany and an Anglo-French-Polish coalition but eventually widened to include most of the nations of the world. It ended in 1945, leaving a new world order of the Superpowers dominated by the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Three major powers had been dissatisfied with the outcome of World War I. Germany, the principal defeated nation, bitterly resented the territorial losses and reparations payments imposed on it by the *Treaty of Versailles*. Italy, one of the victors, found its territorial gains far from enough either to offset the cost of the war or to satisfy its ambitions. Japan, also a victor, was unhappy about its failure to gain greater holdings in East Asia. France, Great Britain, and the United States had attained their wartime objectives. They had reduced Germany to a military cipher and had reorganized Europe and the world as they saw fit, with the French Empire and the British Empire controlling much of the globe. The French and the British frequently disagreed on policy in the post-war period, however, and were unsure of their ability to defend the peace settlement. The United States, disillusioned with the *Treaty of Versailles*, with the selfish nature of Allied war aims, and with the secret treaties they had signed during the war, disavowed the treaty and the League of Nations included in it, and retreated into political isolationism. Treaties between Germany, Italy, and Japan in 1936-1937 brought into being the *Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Ax-*

is. *The Axis Powers* thereafter became the collective term for those countries and their allies. Joseph Stalin, the Soviet dictator, had offered military help to Czechoslovakia during the 1938 crisis, but had been ignored by all the parties to the Munich Agreement. Now that war threatened, he was courted by both sides, but Hitler made the more attractive offer. Allied with Britain and France, the USSR might well have had to fight, but all Germany asked for was its neutrality. In Moscow, on the night of August 23, 1939, the *Nazi-Soviet Pact* was signed. In the part published the next day, Germany and the Soviet Union agreed not to go to war against each other. In the early morning hours of September 1, 1939, the German armies marched into Poland. On September 3, the British and French surprised Hitler by declaring war on Germany. The entrance of The United States on the Allied side was marked by the attack on the Pearl Harbor. Early in the morning of December 7, 1941, Japanese submarines and carrier-based planes attacked the US Pacific fleet at *Pearl Harbor*. Nearby military airfields were also attacked by the Japanese planes. Eight American battleships and 10 other naval vessels were sunk or badly damaged, almost 200 American aircraft were destroyed, and approximately 3,000 naval and military personnel were killed or wounded.



Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor, Hawaii

The Axis was dominating during the first phase of war. But the *Battle of Midway* (June 1942) near the Midway Islands in the Atlantic Ocean, the *Battle of El-Alamein* (October 1942) in North Africa, the *Battle of Stalingrad* (July 17, 1942 – February 2, 1943) and the *Battle of Kursk* (July 5 – August 23, 1943) marked the radical turn in the war. Now the Allies took the strategical initiative into their hands. On June 6, 1944 the second (Anglo-American) front was opened in Europe during the *Overlord operation* in Normandy, in the north of France. Eventually all the European countries were set free one after another. The capitulation of Berlin on May 8, 1945 was the final defeat of Germany. On August 9, 1945 the USSR declared the war to Japan, which capitulated on September 2.

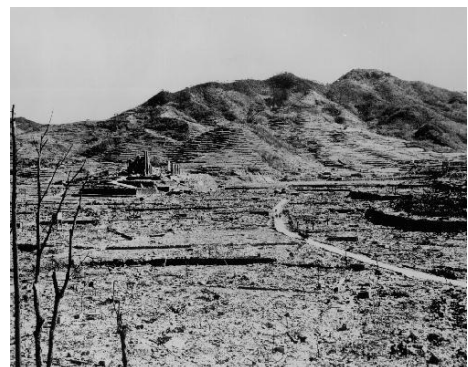


A U.S. plane drops an atomic bomb on Nagasaki

One of the most tragic and devastating operations of the World War II was the bombing of Japanese cities *Hiroshima* and *Nagasaki*. Throughout the war, the US government and the British had maintained a massive scientific and industrial project to develop nuclear weapons, believing Germany was doing the same. The first atomic bomb was exploded in a test in New Mexico, on July 16, 1945. Two more bombs had been built,

and the possibility arose of using them to convince the Japanese to surrender.

President Harry S. Truman, who had succeeded Roosevelt in April, decided to allow the bombs to be dropped because, he said, he believed they might save thousands of American lives and end the war quickly. Some historians have speculated that the decision was influenced by a desire to exhibit the new weapon to the Soviets in preparation for post-war power struggles. For maximum psychological impact, they were used in quick succes-



Nagasaki after the bomb

sion, one over Hiroshima on August 6, the other over Nagasaki on August 9. In Hiroshima the blast flattened more than 10 sq km (4 sq mi), about 60 per cent of the city. US estimates put the number killed in Hiroshima at 66,000 to 78,000 (in 1940 the population of Hiroshima had been 343,700) and in Nagasaki at 39,000. Japanese estimates gave a combined total of 240,000.

By far the most horrifying event was the deliberate murder of 5 million Jewish men, women, and children, deported from Germany, Poland, and other occupied countries to Nazi concentration camps. This was Hitler's "Final Solution" to the Jewish "problem". In 1942 a conference of German officials drew up plans for a more "scientific" approach, the *Holocaust*, which involved herding these people – as well as other target groups such as Gypsies – into killing camps, where they were exterminated in gas chambers and then cremated. In some camps 10,000 of these unfortunates could be gassed every day. It is not known how many Germans and their collaborators in occupied territories were involved or connived in this mass slaughter, but certainly it was not restricted, as was believed immediately after the war, to Heinrich Himmler and his entourage and a few German civil servants and police officials, with the bulk of the German population unaware of what was going on – the network of the guilty appears to have been much wider than that.

As well as this monstrous programme of extermination, the human cost of the war was appalling for most of the belligerents. The USSR lost the most – an estimated 27 million civilian and military personnel killed – including large numbers of Russian prisoners deliberately starved to death in German prisoner-of-war camps. Poland lost around a fifth of its civilian population. Allied civilian losses were 44 million; Axis losses, 11 million. The military deaths on both sides in Europe numbered 19 million, and in the war against Japan, 6 million. Only the United States was spared any significant civilian losses, with 292,131 military deaths in battle and 115,187 military deaths from other causes.

In its early stages the war was depicted in the West as a struggle of the democracies (France and Britain) against a fanatical and evil German National Socialist dictatorship. This perception was magnified after the entry of the USSR and the United States on the side of Britain in 1941, and Italy and Japan on the side of Germany in 1940 and 1941. From then on the Western powers proclaimed the war as a fight to the finish against the totalitarian Axis, a view reinforced by Roosevelt's call for the unconditional surrender of the Axis powers in 1943. As the war dragged on, the distinction between the belligerent peoples and their "evil" governments became increasingly blurred in the Allied mind. This depiction of the war as a life-or-death struggle between democracy and fascism was a convenient fiction – the USSR was anything but democratic, although Stalin made some cosmetic changes, such as the abolition of the Comintern, and relaxation of religious and anti-Semitic persecution.

The war's end was a total victory for the "democratic" coalition. Fascism and Japanese militarism had been crushed, and for Roosevelt a future peaceful world order could now be guaranteed by the UN, presided over by the four major victor powers, the United States, the USSR, Great Britain, and China. His vision soon faded after his death on April 12, 1945. China collapsed into civil war. Britain attempted to assert its continuing great-power status as a victor, but by 1945, having lost the bulk of its overseas assets and nearly bankrupted by its war effort, this was to be an uphill, and ultimately fruitless, task. The loss of Singapore had been a fatal blow to Britain's already tottering prestige in Asia.



London during the Blitz, 1941

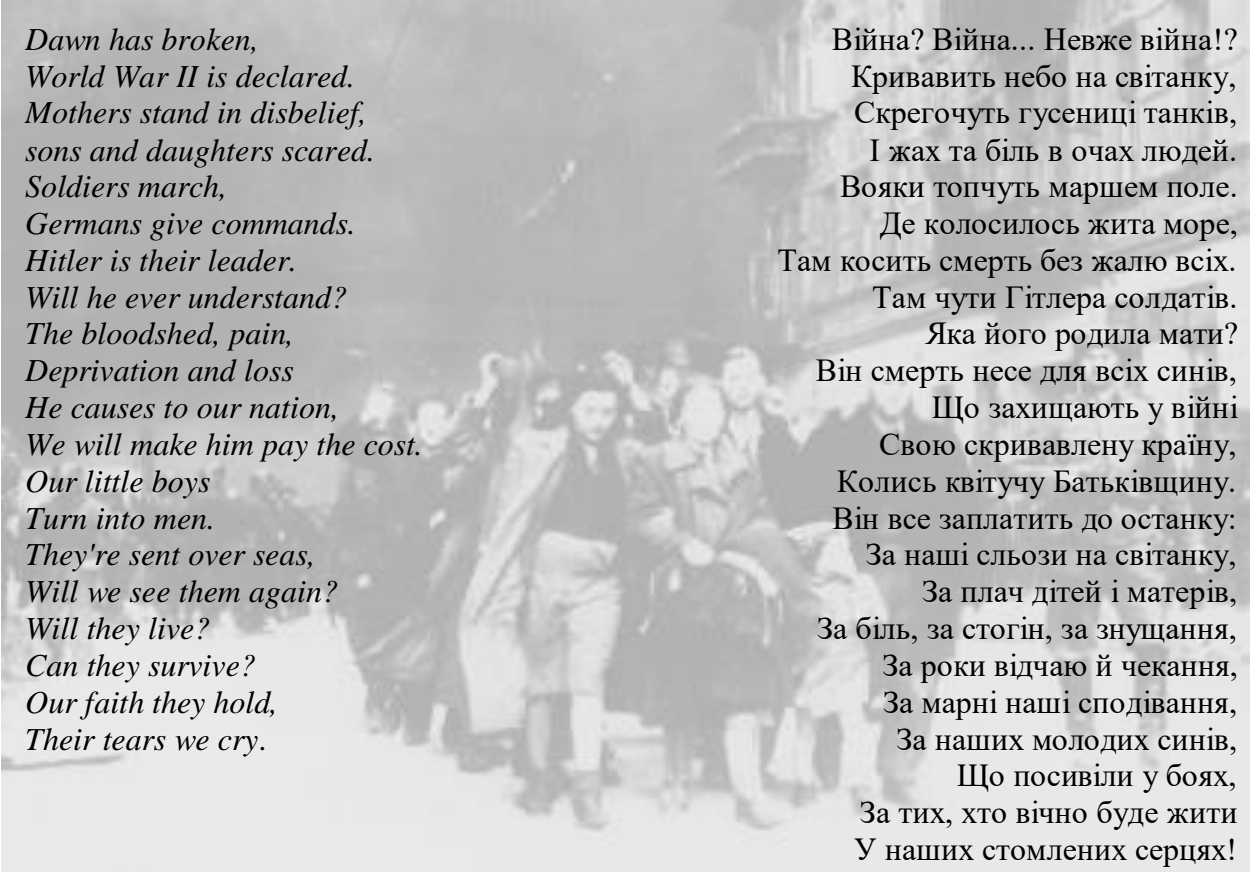
before seen in the history of humankind. By 1945 the pre-

1939 status quo had disappeared beyond recall. France, Germany, and Western Europe were in ruins, and the devastated lands of Eastern and Central Europe were under Soviet control. The United States had emerged as the predominant global power, rich in human skills, boundless energy, and natural resources, with her homeland barely touched by the ravages of war. When the United States and the USSR quarreled after 1946 the stage was set for a new conflict – the *Cold War*.

2. The Lost Voices of The Second World War

Image of the War

by Sarah King (9th Grade)



*Dawn has broken,
World War II is declared.
Mothers stand in disbelief,
sons and daughters scared.
Soldiers march,
Germans give commands.
Hitler is their leader.
Will he ever understand?
The bloodshed, pain,
Deprivation and loss
He causes to our nation,
We will make him pay the cost.
Our little boys
Turn into men.
They're sent over seas,
Will we see them again?
Will they live?
Can they survive?
Our faith they hold,
Their tears we cry.*

Війна? Війна... Невже війна!?
Кривавить небо на світанку,
Скрегочуть гусениці танків,
І жах та біль в очах людей.
Вояки топчуть маршем поле.
Де колосилось жита море,
Там косить смерть без жалю всіх.
Там чути Гітлера солдатів.
Яка його родила мати?
Він смерть несе для всіх синів,
Що захищають у війні
Свою скривавлену країну,
Колись квітучу Батьківщину.
Він все заплатить до останку:
За наші сльози на світанку,
За плач дітей і матерів,
За біль, за стогін, за знуцання,
За роки відчаю й чекання,
За марні наші сподівання,
За наших молодих синів,
Що посивіли у боях,
За тих, хто вічно буде жити
У наших стомлених серцях!

Circumstances of the war itself often determine and shape the poetry. An individual soldier can experience the pity and horror of war within the time frame of one battle and be shocked as never before. Even a two-hour battle gives sufficient material for a poet to work with. But World War II had the dulling element of endlessness which affected its soldier-poets as today's soldier-poets can never be affected. Thereto combatants weren't the only casualties of the war. Civilians in the vast war zones became part of the fighting fronts, and suffered from disease, malnutrition, and often actual starvation, destruction of their towns and cities, and appalling injuries and death. They were also adversely affected in other ways. Many were forced into slave labour in Germany's factories and armaments industries, while French, Belgian, Dutch, and Italian citizens were shipped to Germany to work in its factories. Many of the slave labourers were starved to death. All these atrocities fired people's imagination and compelled them to speak, because **word was the only weapon they could use not against each other but against the war itself**. Among the American poets who took part in this struggle against fascism, genocide and mass slaughter are James Dickey, Anthony Hecht, Robinson Jeffers, Randall Jarrell, Gwendolyn Brooks, Robert Lowell.

But there was also another kind of the World War II poetry – the poetry written by people confined for no reason other than their race or religion: the Japanese kept in the internment camps in the United States, and the Europeans (mostly the Jews) kept in ghettos and concentration camps in Europe. This poetry shows us the other side of the World War II – ideological front, which served as the dark, sinister background for the military operations. It reveals the appalling outrage on humanity committed by the Nazis as well as by the Bolsheviks and all other people who infringed upon the main human rights such as the freedom in choosing, right to live and to be independent. But nevertheless, this moving poetry is often filled with love for life and hope. It appeals to our morality and humanism, it calls us to protest against the war in its every manifestation. The largest difference in the poetry is not found between what was written in the different locations across an ocean but rather across generations.

From 1942 to 1945 people of Japanese ancestry living in the United States were relocated to internment camps. The Gila Relocation Center in Arizona set up High School and the students there wrote a booklet of poetry called "*Cactus Blossoms*". The poems in "*Cactus Blossoms*", while they do reflect what was going on in the lives of these students, are not despairing. A wonderful example of their writing is:

BE LIKE THE CACTUS by Kimii Nagata
Let not harsh tongues, that wag
in vain,
Discourage you. In spite of
pain,
Be like the cactus, which through
rain,
And storm, and thunder, can
remain.

All of these children found a way for their spirits to live and for hope to overcome fear and despair. They saw reality, but they still maintained their childish outlook, an outlook of truth which distinguishes between night and day and cannot be confused with false hopes and the shadow-play of an imaginary life.

The children living in ghettos and concentration camps were going through more than the children living in the relocation camps, and so while some of their poetry is more sad, more about death, it is still very hopeful:

When dewdrops sparkle in the grass
And earth's aflood with morning light,
A blackbird sings upon a bush
To greet the dawning after night.

Then I know how fine it is to live. (From the poem "Birdsong" by an anonymous child)

Much of the poetry written by children in ghettos and concentration camps also seems to be about the outdoors, and not much of it is about God. The poetry written in the Japanese internment camps by children was often about nature and also often about God. Perhaps the European children had given up on God and did not feel a strong connection to God because their beliefs about religion were the reason they were in those horrible places.

There is, however, another type of writing by the children in both of these situations. In this writing they portrayed what they were seeing around them through their grown-up eyes. This writing is even more sad and in it the children seem innocent yet old.

AT TEREZN by *Teddy*
(written in Terezn Concentration Camp, 1943)



*When a new child comes,
Everything seems strange to him.
What, on the ground I have to lie?
Eat black potatoes? No! Not I!
I've got to stay? It's dirty here!
The floor – why, look, it's dirt, I fear!
And I'm supposed to sleep on it?
I'll get all dirty!*

*Here the sound of shouting, cries,
And oh, so many flies.
Everyone knows flies carry disease.
Oooh, something bit me! Wasn't that a bedbug?
Here in Terezn, life is hell
And when I'll go home again, I can't yet tell.*

The poetry written by adults during World War II is very different from the poetry written by children. It is very straight forward, describing facts and situations and letting their anger and sadness speak through descriptions. Again, the only difference between the poetry written in the relocation camps and that written in the ghettos and concentration camps is that the adults in the ghettos and concentration camps had more horrors to describe. Another thing that brought down their spirits was seeing their children suffer and die. It is reflected in many of their poems. This is an extract from the poem “*Barracks home*” written in Japanese internment camp by Tojo Kawakami:

*This is our barracks, squatting on the ground,
Tar papered shacks, partitioned into rooms
By sheetrock walls, transmitting every sound
Of neighbor's gossip or the sweep of brooms
The open door welcomes the refugees,
And now at least there is no need to roam
Afar: here space enlarges memories
Beyond the bounds of camp and this new home.*

Even though the children experienced the horrors that the adults did, their spirits survived better in some ways. They saw too what the grown-ups didn't want to see – the beauties beyond the village gates, the green meadows and the bluish hills, the ribbon of highway reaching off into the distance. The children also did not feel the responsibility for their families that adults did. Adults wrote poems about what was going on around them and expressed their emotions through the telling of stories or describing of settings while the child poets of World War II wrote poems encouraging memories, perseverance, and hope.

While reading this poetry we understand the complicated psychological state of people who faced up with war. The other great function of it is, I think, to commemorate all the casualties:

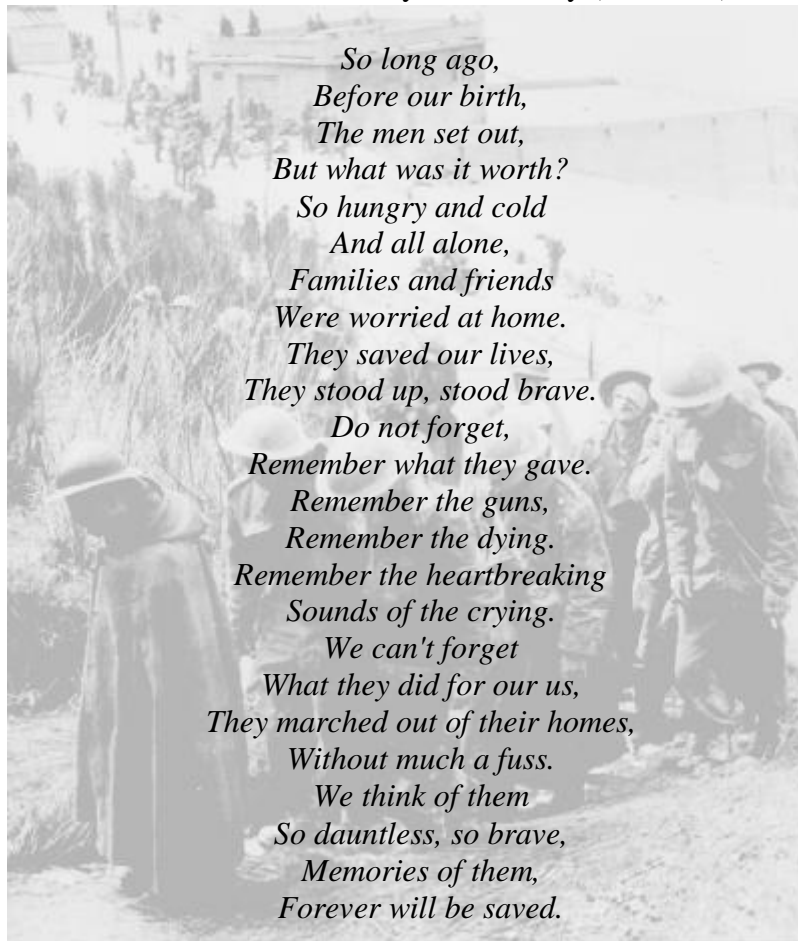
*What stayed are the memories
So vivid, so true
Fighting and suffering
They all died for you.*

*(Resolution: A War Poem
by Vanessa Kilburn, 9th Grade)*

V. IN THE LINES, BETWEEN THE LINES, BEHIND THE LINES

CONCLUSION

Remember Forever by Jen Delaney (7th Grade)



“The world cannot be ruled by love and harmony, it is an incontestable principle. If the teaching of old Pythagoras could have been applied, the world would have been in a marvelously peaceful and wise state and we would be mild in every respect. But the world would have remained as it was in 600 B.C. because any progress is impossible without conflicts, at least ideological. That teaching cannot be applied and never was applied. And what has Christianity produced? Constant fighting, it started with bloody fighting at the very beginning, it is a long string of wars and revolutions. That is the history of Christianity and it is full of devils.

To obstruct totally deep-seated psychic drives such as the urge to struggle is a sheer folly, because in the end this obstruction leads to the very violence it seeks to avoid. Yet it is clear we cannot afford any longer the kind of hostilities that take place on modern battlefields. Our world is too small and fragile, too precious, and the weapons are too destructive. How, then, are we to deal with the old drives? The answer is not to abolish wars (as if we could), but maybe to find less violent ways of being warriors – possibly becoming warriors for the earth and the environment, or warriors against poverty, illiteracy, overpopulation, and human suffering in all its forms – to practice, in other words, the compassion. But there is the other side of this theory. We do not choose war, it chooses us: and if we forget this maxim we are in grave danger. When we sublimate our drive toward war in sociably valuable ways we intellectualize it. *We simply cannot think our way out of war.* How many people died in all the wars, massacres, slaughters and oppressions of the Twentieth Century?

Here are some estimates, given by Zbigniew Brzezinski (1996):

167,000,000 to 175,000,000

Including:

- War dead: *87,500,000*
 - Military war dead: *33,500,000*
 - Civilian war dead: *54,000,000*
- Not-war dead (tyrannical regime victimization): *80,000,000*
 - Communist oppression: *60,000,000*
- *86,000,000* since the World War II

Down the ages the great voices proved that poets aren't delicate creatures dealing with sentiments and mystic fancies, but not with stern social and political issues. Remember Euripide's social-political challenge; Dante lashing tyranny; Shakespeare dissecting injustice; in the stormy dawn of the democratic era, Byron and Shelley, Hunt and Blake championing political and intellectual freedom; and in the nineteenth century, the Brownings, Swinburne, Morris and Blunt in England, Heine, Hugo, Carducci and many another on the Continent, winning new frontiers against superstition and privilege and crying out against exploitation and imperialism. But the poets of the twentieth century, the bloodiest century in the human history, which was marked with the culmination of international and internal confrontation, condemned violence and total neglect of the human rights as no one before. Let's just turn to the poem *Two Sides of War (All Wars)* by Grantland Rice:

*All wars are planned by older men
In council rooms apart,
Who call for greater armament
And map the battle chart.*

*But out along the shattered field
Where golden dreams turn gray,
How very young the faces were
Where all the dead men lay.*

*Portly and solemn in their pride,
The elders cast their vote
For this or that, or something else,
That sounds the martial note.*

*But where their sightless eyes stare out
Beyond life's vanished toys,
I've noticed nearly all the dead
Were hardly more than boys.*

It is unthinkable that poets worthy of the name could ignore the terrifying questions confronting our times. Man has made some progress, painfully through hundreds of years, toward knowledge, toward intelligent use of his powers and the resources of the world he lives in, toward justice, toward dignity: *shall this progress be brutally halted and reversed?* Man has conceived the ideal of brotherhood and a good life for all: *shall this ideal be choked in his blood? Shall art be perverted to the sole service of exploitation?* A society at last is taking form in which all shall share in the fruits of intelligent cooperation. But greed and avarice, hatred and violence say the world shall be a place where a few shall enjoy the abundance produced by millions, toiling under the lash, brutalized, and in their misery smiting each other in

the names of race and religion. Such are the issues making up the question to which war poets are seeking and finding answers.

In this hour of the world's agony, of flaming cities and dying men, of murdered women and children, in this hour of the great split, they have found these particulars of the answer: to appeal to the human conscience; to resist; to resume the great tradition of poetry as a sword against evil; to tear off the masks of fascism; to mourn fallen heroes and praise their deeds. The war poets of the twentieth century surveyed the needs of their tremendous epoch, they have seized the popular imagination and have steered the people's emotions – they are truly singers of the people, by the people, for the people.

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