For the Fallen

Robert Laurence Binyon,

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children, England mourns for her dead across the sea. Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit, Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill: Death august and royal Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres. There is music in the midst of desolation And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young, Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow. They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted, They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old: Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again; They sit no more at familiar tables of home; They have no lot in our labour of the day-time; They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound, Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight, To the innermost heart of their own land they are known As the stars are known to the Night;

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust, Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain, As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness, To the end, to the end, they remain.

Biography: Robert Laurence Binyon, born 10 August 1869 at Lancaster and died 10 March 1943 at Reading Berkshire, was an English poet, dramatist and art scholar. He was too old to sign up for the war so he became a medical orderly in 1916 for the Red Cross. Binyon’s inspiration for his most famous poem, “For the Fallen”, was from within a few weeks of the outbreak of war in 1914, where just in those few weeks, so many casualties had happened. He wrote the poem on the cliff-top overlooking a beautiful view of the north Cornish coastline. A plaque remains there in remembrance.

In his most famous poem, “For the Fallen”, Binyon is expressing ideas such as calling England ‘mother’ and basically comparing England and its soldiers to a mother and her children so England must look after its people and soldiers, just like a mother does for her children. Bunion expressed this idea because obviously England’s soldiers were not taken care of; the mother did not look after her children because many soldiers died and many more were fatally injured. Another idea which Binyon expressed is when he wrote “They fell with their faces to the foe.” This means that Englands young soldiers all died to the ‘foe’ (enemy army) because they were too young and young in mind to fight. These ideas were very valid because no, England did not look after its soldiers (many died or were gravely injured) and many soldiers who enlisted were at least 12 years of age or higher; they joined because they were either forced to, they wanted to be with their dads and brothers, or because they thought they were strong and big enough to take on such a huge and life threatening job. The significance of these ideas to us today is that we must cherish the courage that every soldier had in order to fight for their country, even when they knew that their life was at a huge risk.
Anthem for Doomed Youth

BY WILFRED OWEN

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 now 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.

Biography: Wilfred Edward Salter Owen, born 18 March 1893 in Shropshire, England, was an English war poet and soldier. Owen was killed in action on 4 November 1918 during the crossing of the SambreOise Canal, exactly one week before the signing of the Armistice and was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant the day after his death. Owen's poems were influenced by the fact that he was a soldier facing the reality of what war was and one of his good friends, Siegfried Sassoon (another famous war poet) also influenced his works.

In this poem, Wilfred Owen is expressing the idea that all of the young soldiers who sign up for the war will just be treated like cattle; they will be let out onto the fields to have a little wonder and then they will all be lined up and killed at once, just like cattle. The young soldiers will have no to little chance to survive, however, their family back home will mourn for them dearly. Another idea which Owen used is when he wrote, “What candles may be held to speed them all?”, meaning that the candle would symbolise life in a religious factor and the families of the soldiers back home would hold these candles to represent the dead soldiers life and would pray that their death was fast and painless (“speed them all”).

These ideas were very valid because all of the soldiers (young and old) were shown to be treated as cattle; they were all lined up to their death. Also because when a loved soldier did die, their families did mourn for them back at home and religion was a very popular thing back then so many of the soldiers were prayed for.

The significance of these ideas to us today is that we must keep praying for all the soldiers who are dead or alive, retired or still on patrol, in the past or the present. Even if some of us don't belong to a religious group, a positive thought in our minds would be enough to thank them for what they have done to save us all.

Language Features + Meanings

• “for these who die as cattle?” - Simile - describes the young soldiers as ‘cattle’, probably to show that like cattle, the young soldiers were just thrown out onto the fields to all be massacred at once as if treating the soldiers as if they were animals (hardly a chance of survival).

• “Only the monstrous anger of the guns” - personification - describes the gun to be monstrous and angry, helps the audience get a feeling on what the poem means and to set a violent mood to the poem.

• Rhyming - All the green words rhyme with one of the other green words. Rhyming seems to get a meaning across to the reader.

• “mourning save the choirs” - metaphor - comparing a ‘choir’ to the reality of war.
The Rear-Guard
BY SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Groping along the tunnel, step by step,
He winked his prying torch with patching glare
From side to side, and sniffed the unwholesome air.

Tins, boxes, bottles, shapes and too vague to know;
A mirror smashed, the mattress from a bed;
And he, exploring fifty feet below
The rosy gloom of battle overhead.

Tripping, he grabbed the wall; saw someone lie
Humped at his feet, half-hidden by a rug.
And stooped to give the sleeper's arm a tug.
“I'm looking for headquarters.” No reply,
“God blast your neck!” (For days he’d had no sleep.)
“Get up and guide me through this stinking place.”
Savage, he kicked a soft, unanswering heap,
And flashed his beam across the livid face
Terribly glaring up, whose eyes yet wore
Agony dying hard of ten days before;
And fists of fingers clutched a blackening wound.

Alone he staggered on until he found
Dawn's ghost that filtered down a shafted stair
To the dazed, muttering creatures underground
Who hear the boom of shells in muffled sound.
At last, with sweat and horror in his hair,
He climbed through darkness to the twilight air,
Unloading hell behind him step by step.

Biography: Siegfried Sassoon, born 8 September, 1886 Kent, England, was an English poet, writer and soldier. Motivated by patriotism, Sassoon joined the British Army just as the threat of a new European war was recognised, and was in service with the Sussex Yeomanry on 4 August 1914, the day the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland declared war on Germany. Sassoon survived the war, however later died 1st September 1967 of Stomach Cancer, a week before his 81st birthday.

In Sassoon’s poem, “The Rear-Guard,” he is expressing the idea that the reality of war was very gory and nightmarish. This is expressed by Sassoon describing the state of what one of the bunkers within the trenches looked like to the soldier in the poem. He describes the bunker as being messy, filthy and just a completely trashed look. Sassoon expressed this idea because he wanted his audience to understand what he and many more men had to go through.

The idea of including the fact that the soldier in the poem found another soldier, but dead, really makes the audience feel the gruesomeness and insanaseness of what went on in the war. This idea is valid because what Sassoon describes the battlefield to be like was no where near far from the truth. In fact, it might be possible that the soldier described in his poem might actually be him and that finding a dead soldier in one of the bunkers was an experience that he had. The significance of this idea to us today is that we must be truly grateful that people in our days have a choice in whether they want to go to war or not and that we are all given the chance to live long, happy and healthy lives, whereas the poor boys and men back in 1914+ didn't have a chance in whether they wanted to put their lives at huge risk or not.

Language Features + Meanings
• Rhyme - All the orange words rhyme with another orange word. Rhyming seems to get a meaning across to the reader and gives the poem a certain type of structure.
• “Tins, boxes, bottles, shapes and too vague to know” - Listing - This is used to emphasise the extent of something; shows that the author has a wide knowledge of the topic.
• “Step by Step” - Repetition - Used at the end of the first and last sentence of the poem. Repetition is used to draw the reader to a particular idea or phase.
• “Terribly glaring up, whose eyes yet wore Agony dying hard of ten days before” - Enjambment - In poetry, an idea continues onto the next line without punctuation, this helps to intensify what the poet is trying to get across.

This poem sets a tone/mood that makes the reader get an image in their head of what war really was, the reality of war.
Memorial Tablet
Siegfried Sassoon

SQUIRE nagged and bullied till I went to fight,
(Under Lord Derby’s Scheme). I died in hell —
(They called it Passchendaele). My wound was slight,
And I was hobbling back; and then a shell
Burst slick upon the duck-boards: so I fell
Into the bottomless mud, and lost the light.

At sermon-time, while Squire is in his pew,
He gives my gilded name a thoughtful stare:
‘In proud and glorious memory’ ... that’s my due.
Two bleeding years I fought in France, for Squire:
I suffered anguish that he’s never guessed.
Once I came home on leave: and then went west...
What greater glory could a man desire?

Language Features + Meanings
- Rhyme - All the red words rhyme with another red word. Rhyming seems to get a meaning across to the reader and gives the poem a certain type of structure.
- Rhetorical question - What greater glory could a man desire? - by asking a rhetorical question, it implies that the answer is so obvious that if anyone answers incorrectly they are seen as a fool.
- Sarcasm - There’s a sense of slight sarcasm throughout the whole poem - this helps the audience understand that the poet is angry and disgusted towards the idea of war.
- Enjambment - In poetry, an idea continues onto the next line without punctuation, this helps to intensify what the poet is trying to get across. This is displayed through most of the poem.

This author sets a tone/mood that tells his audience that he does not like the war and that he had no choice but to sign up and the person that made him sign up wasn’t grateful at all.

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In this poem, ‘Memorial Tablet’, Sassoon expresses the idea that the soldiers who went to war, weren’t appreciated enough for what they had done by their ‘squires’, which in this poem may be the leaders of the countries who ordered war (eg. Hitler was a squire in WWII). This idea is expressed when Sassoon quotes, “Two bleeding years I fought in France, for Squire: I suffered anguish that he’s never guessed.” Sassoon expressed this idea because he believes that the squires didn’t pay enough respect to the soldiers tributes and their families, the squires didn’t understand how much agony the soldiers went through both mentally and physically because they stayed in their houses trying to keep safe and not out on the western front where all the soldiers were suffering. This idea is valid because Sassoon does have a point that the ‘Squires’ nagged, bullied and pleaded men to go to war and then once the war was over and the squires were safe, the squires didn’t give any recognition to the soldiers who fought for their lives. The significance of this idea to us today is that we must take upon the soldiers pleas (dead or alive) and acknowledge and thank them for everything they have done and appreciate the bravery that they had to work up in order to go out on the western front. We must continue with war appreciation days like ANZAC Day (April 25) and study with passion when we are told to learn about what the soldiers went through at school.

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