**World War 1 Poetry**

**The Soldier by Rupert Brooke**

If I should die, think only this of me:  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever England. There shall be  
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;  
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,  
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,  
A body of England's, breathing English air,  
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

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.

## 'They' by Siegfried Sassoon

The Bishop tells us: 'When the boys come back  
'They will not be the same; for they'll have fought  
'In a just cause: they lead the last attack  
'On Anti-Christ; their comrades' blood has bought  
'New right to breed an honourable race,  
'They have challenged Death and dared him face to face.'

'We're none of us the same!' the boys reply.  
'For George lost both his legs; and Bill's stone blind;  
'Poor Jim's shot through the lungs and like to die;  
'And Bert's gone syphilitic: you'll not find  
'A chap who's served that hasn't found some change.  
' And the Bishop said: 'The ways of God are strange!'

**Dulce Et Decorum Est by Wilfred Owen**

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

(“Dulce et decorum est, pro patria mori” means “How sweet it is to die for one’s country”)

**World War 1 Poetry Questions**

1. In “The Soldier,” what is the author’s attitude about death in battle?
2. What is the soldier’s greatest love?
3. What does the author say happens to the land on which a soldier dies?
4. In “They,” what is the Bishop’s attitude about battle?
5. How does the Bishop view the purpose of the war?
6. What do the soldiers’ comments reveal about the reality of war?
7. How does the author of “Dulce et Decorum Est” describe the soldiers?
8. What event’s terror does the author try to convey?
9. What happens to the mask-less soldier during the attack?
10. What attitude does “Dulce et Decorum Est” question?