

**WE SHALL KEEP THE FAITH**

Oh! you who sleep in Flanders Fields,  
Sleep sweet - to rise anew!  
We caught the torch you threw  
And holding high, we keep the Faith  
With All who died.

We cherish, too, the poppy red  
That grows on fields where valor led;  
It seems to signal to the skies  
That blood of heroes never dies,  
But lends a lustre to the red  
Of the flower that blooms above the dead  
In Flanders Fields.

And now the Torch and Poppy Red  
We wear in honor of our dead.  
Fear not that ye have died for naught;  
We'll teach the lesson that ye wrought  
In Flanders Fields.

**Moina Michael, November 1918**

*The Flanders Fields Red Poppy was first created as a symbol of Remembrance by an American teacher, Miss Moina Belle Michael.*

*Having read John McCrae's poem 'In Flanders Fields' Moina Michael made a personal pledge to 'keep the faith'. She felt compelled to make a note of this pledge and hastily scribbled down a response entitled "We Shall Keep the Faith" on the back of a used envelope. From that day she vowed to wear a red poppy of Flanders Fields as a sign of remembrance.*

*As a result of Moina Michael's tireless campaigning, her complete dedication to the cause and the inspiration her idea gave to others, the delicate flower of the red field poppy has become an internationally-recognised symbol of Remembrance and welfare for war veterans.*

**A SOLDIER'S CEMETARY**

Behind that long and lonely trenched line  
To which men come and go, where brave men die,  
There is a yet unmarked and unknown shrine,  
A broken plot, a soldier's cemetery.

There lie the flower of youth, the men who scorn'd  
To live (so died) when languished Liberty:  
Across their graves flowerless and unadorned  
Still scream the shells of each artillery.

When war shall cease this lonely unknown spot  
Of many a pilgrimage will be the end,  
And flowers will shine in this now barren plot  
And fame upon it through the years descend:  
But many a heart upon each simple cross  
Will hang the grief, the memory of its loss.

**John William Streets (killed and missing in action on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916 aged 31)**

*John William Streets, known as 'Will', wrote about the inspiration for his poems in a letter to the poetry publisher, Galloway Kyle:*

*"They were inspired while I was in the trenches, where I have been so busy I have had little time to polish them. I have tried to picture some thoughts that pass through a man's brain when he dies. I may not see the end of the poems, but I hope to live to do so. We soldiers have our views of life to express, though the boom of death is in our ears. We try to convey something of what we feel in this great conflict to those who think of us, and sometimes, alas! Mourn our loss."*

*Unfortunately, Will's desire to live to see his poems published was never fulfilled.*

*Will's body was missing for 10 months before it was identified; it was found in the area of No-Mans Land. On 1<sup>st</sup> May 1917 he was officially listed as "Killed".*

## POETRY & SONGS FROM WW1

100 YEARS 1914-18

### IN MEMORIAM

So you were David's father,  
And he was your only son,  
And the new-cut peats are rotting  
And the work is left undone,  
Because of an old man weeping,  
Just an old man in pain,  
For David, his son David,  
That will not come again.

Oh, the letters he wrote you,  
And I can see them still,  
Not a word of the fighting,  
But just the sheep on the hill  
And how you should get the crops in  
Ere the year get stormier,  
And the Bosches have got his body,  
And I was his officer.

You were only David's father,  
But I had fifty sons  
When we went up in the evening  
Under the arch of the guns,  
And we came back at twilight -

O God! I heard them call  
To me for help and pity  
That could not help at all.

Oh, never will I forget you,  
My men that trusted me,  
More my sons than your fathers',  
For they could only see  
The little helpless babies  
And the young men in their pride.  
They could not see you dying,  
And hold you while you died.

Happy and young and gallant,  
They saw their first-born go,  
But not the strong limbs broken  
And the beautiful men brought low,  
The piteous writhing bodies,  
They screamed "Don't leave me, sir",  
For they were only your fathers  
But I was your officer.

**Ewart Alan Mackintosh (killed  
in action 21<sup>st</sup> November 1917  
aged 24)**

*On the evening of 16<sup>th</sup> May,  
1916 Lieutenant Ewart Alan  
Mackintosh and Second  
Lieutenant Mackay of the  
5th Battalion Seaforth  
Highlanders led a raid on the  
German trenches in the  
sector of the front line north-  
west of Arras.*

*By the end of the night there  
were sixteen British  
casualties, which included  
fourteen wounded and two  
killed. One of the two dead  
soldiers was Private David  
Sutherland.*

*Private David Sutherland has  
no known grave. His name is  
commemorated in Bay 8 of  
the Arras Memorial to the  
Missing at Faubourg  
d'Amiens military cemetery in  
Arras.*

## POETRY & SONGS FROM WW1

100 YEARS 1914-18

### BEFORE ACTION

By all the glories of the day  
And the cool evening's benison  
By that last sunset touch that lay  
Upon the hills when day was done,  
By beauty lavishly outpoured  
And blessings carelessly received,  
By all the days that I have lived  
Make me a soldier, Lord.

By all of all man's hopes and fears  
And all the wonders poets sing,  
The laughter of unclouded years,  
And every sad and lovely thing;  
By the romantic ages stored  
With high endeavour that was his,  
By all his mad catastrophes  
Make me a man, O Lord.

I, that on my familiar hill  
Saw with uncomprehending eyes  
A hundred of thy sunsets spill  
Their fresh and sanguine sacrifice,  
Ere the sun swings his noonday sword  
Must say good-bye to all of this; -  
By all delights that I shall miss,  
Help me to die, O Lord.

**Lieutenant William Noel Hodgson, MC**

*Serving with the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion the Devonshire Regiment, Lieutenant  
Hodgson was on the Somme battlefield in June 1916 preparing for  
the Battle of the Somme. Originally scheduled to be in August, it was  
brought forward to the 29<sup>th</sup> June. Bad weather in the week building up  
to the battle meant the date of the attack was moved by two days to  
the morning of 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916.*

*Within an hour of the attack it is said that Lieutenant Hodgson was  
killed. He was aged 23. He would never again see a sunset. It is  
believed that he wrote the poem "Before Action" on 29<sup>th</sup> June.*

**NOW THAT YOU TOO**

Now that you too must shortly go the way  
Which in these bloodshot years uncounted men  
Have gone in vanishing armies day by day,  
And in their numbers will not come again:  
I must not strain the moments of our meeting  
Striving for each look, each accent, not to miss,  
Or question of our parting and our greeting,  
Is this the last of all? is this - or this?

Last sight of all it may be with these eyes,  
Last touch, last hearing, since eyes, hands, and ears,  
Even serving love, are our mortalities,  
And cling to what they own in mortal fears:-  
But oh, let end what will, I hold you fast  
By immortal love, which has no first or last.

**Eleanor Farjeon**

*Eleanor Farjeon was born in London and is best known as an author of children's stories.*

*She was a close personal friend of the poet Edward Thomas and his wife Helen in the last few years of his life. She loved Edward, but knew that expressing her feelings to him would mean the immediate end of their friendship. They often visited each other and went on long country walks together. She typed his poems for him and submitted them, on his behalf, under the pseudonym of Edward Eastaway, to various publications.*

*Helen was aware of Eleanor's feelings towards Edward and was perfectly content with the situation, believing that it might help to make Edward a little happier.*

*This moving poem is about saying goodbye to Edward Thomas for the last time.*

**TO MY BROTHER IN MEMORY OF JULY 1<sup>st</sup> 1916**

Your battle-wounds are scars upon my heart,  
Received when in that grand and tragic 'show'  
You played your part,  
Two years ago,

And silver in the summer morning sun  
I see the symbol of your courage glow --  
That Cross you won  
Two years ago.

Though now again you watch the shrapnel fly,  
And hear the guns that daily louder grow,  
As in July  
Two years ago.

May you endure to lead the Last Advance  
And with your men pursue the flying foe  
As once in France  
Two years ago.

**Vera Brittain (1893–1970)**

*Vera Brittain's wartime experiences consisted of almost four years' service as a VAD nurse.*

*In a sense, though, Brittain's war was a war without end, as her sense of loss at the deaths of those dearest to her remained with her all her life, and formed the inspiration for a large proportion of her published writings.*

*She was working in the hospital in Camberwell when Edward, who had received his long-awaited commission in 1916, arrived to recover from wounds received on the first day of the Battle of the Somme in July 1916. He died in 1918.*

*Her first poetry was published in August 1919, Verses of a V.A.D, which contains this poem.*

**GUNS AT SEA**

by Imtarfa (an unknown naval officer)

Let me get back to the guns again, I hear them calling me,  
 And all I ask is my own ship, and the surge of the open sea,  
 In the long, dark nights, when the stars are out, and the clean salt breezes blow,  
 And the land's foul ways are half forgot, like nightmare, and I know  
 That the world is good, and life worth while, and man's real work to do,  
 In the final test, in Nature's school, to see which of us rings true.  
 On shore, in peace, men cheat and lie - but you can't do that at sea,  
 For the sea is strong; if your work is weak, vain is the weakling's plea  
 Of a "first offence" or "I'm only young," or "It shall not happen again,"  
 For the sea finds out your weakness, and writes its lesson plain.  
 "The liar, the slave, the slum-bred cur - let them stay ashore, say I,  
 "For, mark it well, if they come to me, I break them and they die.  
 The land is kind to a soul unsound; I find and probe the flaw,  
 For I am the tears of eternity that rock to eternal law."

*Written by an unknown naval officer, this poem (first verse reproduced here) is a parody of John Masefield's Sea Fever. It was originally published in The Muse in Arms, an anthology of British war poetry published in November 1917 during WW1. The poets were from all three branches of the armed services, land, sea and air, from a range of ranks (though mostly officers) and from many parts of the UK. Twenty of the poets who contributed to this volume died during the war.*

**TO JOHN** (The Hon. John Manners)

O heart-and-soul and careless played  
 Our little band of brothers,  
 And never recked the time would come  
 To change our games for others.  
 It's joy for those who played with you  
 To picture now what grace  
 Was in your mind and single heart  
 And in your radiant face.  
 Your light-foot strength by flood and field  
 For England keener glowed;  
 To whatsoever things are fair  
 We know, through you, the road;  
 Nor is our grief the less thereby;  
 O swift and strong and dear, good-bye.

*One of the war poets, Gerald William Grenfell was the son of 1st Baron Desborough and Lady Desborough, of Taplow Court, Bucks. His brother Julian Henry Francis also fell.*

*He served as a Second Lieutenant in the Rifle Brigade 8th Bn and died on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1915 aged 25. His name appears on the Menin Gate Memorial.*

*John Manners was the son of the third Baron Manners and served as Lieutenant in the Grenadier Guards 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. He died on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1914.*

**Gerald William Grenfell**

**RAIN, 7 Jan 1916**

Rain, midnight rain, nothing but the wild rain  
 On this bleak hut, and solitude, and me  
 Remembering again that I shall die  
 And neither hear the rain nor give it thanks  
 For washing me cleaner than I have been  
 Since I was born into this solitude.  
 Blessed are the dead that the rain rains upon:  
 But here I pray that none whom once I loved  
 Is dying tonight or lying still awake  
 Solitary, listening to the rain,  
 Either in pain or thus in sympathy  
 Helpless among the living and the dead,  
 Like a cold water among broken reeds,  
 Myriads of broken reeds all still and stiff,  
 Like me who have no love which this wild rain  
 Has not dissolved except the love of death,  
 If love it be for what is perfect and  
 Cannot, the tempest tells me,  
 disappoint.

**Edward Thomas**

*Born in Lambeth, London in 1878, of Welsh descent, it was only after a meeting with Robert Frost, the American poet, in 1913 that Thomas devoted himself fully to the medium of poetry.*

*From 1914 the First World War became a shifting presence in Thomas' poetry, acting to concentrate his mind on a vision of England, leading him to write 'war poetry' long before he reached the trenches.*

*He enlisted with the Artists' Rifles and in September 1916 began training in the Royal Garrison Artillery and when he was commissioned second lieutenant in November he volunteered for service overseas. Thomas left England for France in January 1917 and served with no. 244 siege battery. On the 9th April he was killed by a shell blast in the first hour of the Battle of Arras at an observation post whilst directing fire.*

*Thomas wrote no poetry that we know of during his time in France. Some of his poems were published after his death by his close friend Eleanor Farjeon, under the pseudonym Edward Eastaway. In just under two years he had written over 140 poems.*

**WHEN YOU SEE MILLIONS OF THE MOUTHLESS DEAD**

When you see millions of the mouthless dead  
 Across your dreams in pale battalions go,  
 Say not soft things as other men have said,  
 That you'll remember. For you need not so.  
 Give them not praise. For, deaf, how should they know  
 It is not curses heaped on each gashed head?  
 Nor tears. Their blind eyes see not your tears flow.  
 Nor honour. It is easy to be dead.  
 Say only this, 'They are dead.' Then add thereto,  
 'Yet many a better one has died before.'  
 Then, scanning all the o'ercrowded mass, should you  
 Perceive one face that you loved heretofore,  
 It is a spook. None wears the face you knew.  
 Great death has made all his for evermore.

**Charles Sorley**

*Charles Hamilton Sorley (19 May 1895 – 13 October 1915) was a British poet of World War I. Studying in Germany at the outbreak of war he was told to leave the country and enlisted with the Suffolk Regiment. He was killed in action at the Battle of Loos aged 20.*

*Robert Graves, a contemporary of Sorley's, described him in his book Goodbye to All That as "one of the three poets of importance killed during the war". (The other two were Isaac Rosenberg and Wilfred Owen.)*

*This, his last poem was recovered from his kit after his death and contains some of his most famous lines. He is commemorated in Westminster Abbey's Poet's Corner.*

**FOR THE FALLEN (SEP 1914)**

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.

**Robert Laurence Binyon (1869-1943)**

*First published in the Times on Sept 21 1914. Laurence Binyon wrote it while working at the British Museum, and did not go to the western front until 1916, as a Red Cross orderly. The poem's fourth verse is now used all over the world during services of remembrance and is inscribed on countless war memorials.*

**FRAGMENT (1915)**

I strayed about the deck, an hour, to-night  
 Under a cloudy moonless sky; and peeped  
 In at the windows, watched my friends at table,  
 Or playing cards, or standing in the doorway,  
 Or coming out into the darkness. Still  
 No one could see me.

I would have thought of them  
 - Heedless, within a week of battle - in pity,  
 - Pride in their strength and in the weight and firmness  
 And link'd beauty of bodies, and pity that  
 This gay machine of splendour 'ld soon be broken,  
 Thought little of, pashed, scattered. . . .

Only, always,  
 I could but see them - against the lamplight - pass  
 Like coloured shadows, thinner than filmy glass,  
 Slight bubbles, fainter than the wave's faint light,  
 That broke to phosphorous out in the night,  
 Perishing things and strange ghosts - soon to die  
 To other ghosts - this one, or that, or I.

**Rupert Chawner Brooke (1887-1915)**

*After hesitation about what course of action to take at the start of the First World War Rupert Brooke joined the navy. He was a witness at the siege of Antwerp before writing his famous set of five sonnets called 1914. Though he had seen the devastation and suffering created by the war he kept it all at an emotional distance from himself, denying the realities of war.*

*He had a deeply confused personality - given to both ecstatic enthusiasm and suicidal doubt.*

*Following a mosquito bite he died of acute blood poisoning on board ship on his way to Gallipoli, and was buried on the Greek Island of Skyros.*

**MY SON**

Here is his little cambric frock  
That I laid by in lavender so sweet,  
And here his tiny shoe and sock  
I made with loving care for his dear feet.

I fold the frock across my breast  
And in imagination, ah, my sweet,  
Once more I hush my babe to rest  
And once again I warm those little feet.

Where do those strong young feet now stand?  
In flooded trench half numb to cold or pain,  
Or marching through the desert sand  
To some dread place that they may never gain.

God guide him and his men to-day!  
Though death may lurk in any tree or hill,  
His brave young spirit is their stay,  
Trusting in that they'll follow where he will.

They love him for his tender heart  
When poverty or sorrow asks his aid,  
But he must see each do his part --  
Of cowardice alone is he afraid.

I ask no honours on the field,  
That other men have won as brave as he --  
I only pray that God may shield  
My son, and bring him safely back to me.

**Ada Tyrrell (1854-1955)**

*Dublin-born Ada Tyrrell was a life-long friend of George Bernard Shaw. She was the wife of the distinguished Trinity College Dublin classic scholar and Regius Professor of Greek, Robert Yelverton Tyrell (1844-1914). She was a great society hostess in Dublin, reputed for her intellect, beauty and goodness which made her Dublin Salon sought by the great and the good of the time: politicians, artists, literati.*

**THE TRENCHES (1917)**

Endless lanes sunken in the clay,  
Bays, and traverses, fringed with wasted herbage,  
Seed-pods of blue scabious, and some lingering blooms;  
And the sky, seen as from a well,  
Brilliant with frosty stars.  
We stumble, cursing, on the slippery duck-boards.  
Goaded like the damned by some invisible wrath,  
A will stronger than weariness, stronger than animal fear,  
Implacable and monotonous.  
Here a shaft, slanting, and below  
A dusty and flickering light from one feeble candle  
And prone figures sleeping uneasily,  
Murmuring,  
And men who cannot sleep,  
With faces impassive as masks,  
Bright, feverish eyes, and drawn lips,  
Sad, pitiless, terrible faces,  
Each an incarnate curse.  
Here in a bay, a helmeted sentry  
Silent and motionless, watching while two sleep,

And he sees before him  
With indifferent eyes the blasted and torn land  
Peopled with stiff prone forms, stupidly rigid,  
As tho' they had not been men.  
Dead are the lips where love laughed or sang,  
The hands of youth eager to lay hold of life,  
Eyes that have laughed to eyes,  
And these were begotten,  
O Love, and lived lightly, and burnt  
With the lust of a man's first strength: ere they  
were rent,  
Almost at unawares, savagely; and strewn  
In bloody fragments, to be the carrion  
Of rats and crows.  
And the sentry moves not, searching  
Night for menace with weary eyes.

**Frederic Manning (1882-1935)**

*Australian author and poet. Sent to France in 1916, Manning experienced action with the 7th Battalion at the Battle of the Somme, was promoted to lance-corporal and experienced life in the trenches.*

**1914 – I: PEACE**

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

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

*Rupert Brooke (1887-1915) was born into 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 - in part because of his strikingly handsome looks - a popular young man who eventually numbered among his friends E. M. Forster, Maynard Keynes, Virginia Woolf, and Edward Thomas.*

*Even as a student he was familiar in literary circles and came to know many important political, literary and social figures before the war.*

**1914 – II: SAFETY**

Dear! of all happy in the hour, most blest  
 He who has found our hid security,  
 Assured in the dark tides of the world that rest,  
 And heard our word, 'Who is so safe as we?'  
 We have found safety with all things undying,  
 The winds, and morning, tears of men and mirth,  
 The deep night, and birds singing, and clouds flying,  
 And sleep, and freedom, and the autumnal earth.  
 We have built a house that is not for Time's throwing.  
 We have gained a peace unshaken by pain for ever.  
 War knows no power. Safe shall be my going,  
 Secretly armed against all death's endeavour;  
 Safe though all safety's lost; safe where men fall;  
 And if these poor limbs die, safest of all.

**Rupert Chawner Brooke (1887-1915)**

*After hesitation about what course of action to take at the start of the First World War Rupert Brooke joined the navy. He was a witness at the siege of Antwerp before writing these sonnets.*

*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 these five war sonnets.*

**1914 – III: THE DEAD**

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

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

**Rupert Chawner Brooke (1887-1915)**

*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."*

*Sorley held, as a matter of fact, a low opinion of most war poetry: "The voice of our poets and men of letters is finely trained and sweet to hear; it teems with sharp saws and rich sentiment: it is a marvel of delicate technique: it pleases, it flatters, it charms, it soothes: it is a living lie." Sorley was killed in 1915, so he did not live to see the brutal turn poetry would take in the works of Owen, Sassoon & Rosenberg.*

**1914 – IV: THE DEAD**

These hearts were woven of human joys and cares,  
 Washed marvellously with sorrow, swift to mirth.  
 The years had given them kindness. Dawn was theirs,  
 And sunset, and the colours of the earth.  
 These had seen movements, and heard music; known  
 Slumber and waking; loved; gone proudly friended;  
 Felt the quick stir of wonder; sat alone;  
 Touched flowers and furs and cheeks. All this is ended.

There are waters blown by changing winds to laughter  
 And lit by the rich skies, all day. And after,  
 Frost, with a gesture, stays the waves that dance  
 And wandering loveliness. He leaves a white  
 Unbroken glory, a gathered radiance,  
 A width, a shining peace, under the night.

**Rupert Chawner Brooke (1887-1915)**

*How Brooke's poetry would have changed in tone and imagery as the war progressed, 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.*

**1914 – V: 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'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.

**Rupert Chawner Brooke (1887-1915)**

*Brooke's obituary which appeared in the Times on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 1915 contained a piece purportedly by Winston Churchill, although it can be read as little more than a recruiting advert:*

*"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, cruellest, 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."*

**THE MOTHER (1917)**

If you should die, think only this of me  
 In that still quietness where is space for thought,  
 Where parting, loss and bloodshed shall not be,  
 And men may rest themselves and dream of nought:  
 That in some place a mystic mile away  
 One whom you loved has drained the bitter cup  
 Till there is nought to drink; has faced the day  
 Once more, and now, has raised the standard up.

And think, my son, with eyes grown clear and dry  
 She lives as though for ever in your sight,  
 Loving the things you loved, with heart aglow  
 For country, honour, truth, traditions high,  
 --Proud that you paid their price. (And if some night  
 Her heart should break--well, lad, you will not know.

**May Herschel-Clarke (1850-1950)**

*May Herschel-Clarke was an English poet known chiefly for her anti-war poems. She published one volume of poetry in 1917, containing this poem written in response to Rupert Brooke's sonnet, "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.*

**THE KNITTING SONG**

SOLDIER lad, on the sodden ground,  
Sailor lad on the seas,  
Can't you hear a little clicketty sound  
Stealing across on the breeze?  
It's the knitting-needles singing their song  
As they twine the khaki or blue,  
Thousands and thousands and thousands strong,  
Tommy and Jack, for you.

Click -- click -- click,  
How they dart and flick,  
Flashing in the firelight to and fro!  
Now for purl and plain,  
Round and round again,  
Knitting love and luck in every row.

The busy hands may be rough or white,  
The fingers gouty or slim,  
The careful eyes may be youthfully bright,  
Or they may be weary and dim,  
Lady and workgirl, young and old,  
They've all got one end in view,  
Knitting warm comforts against the cold,  
Tommy and Jack, for you.

Knitting away by the midnight oil,  
Knitting when day begins,  
Lads, in the stress of your splendid toil,  
Can't you hear the song of the pins?  
Clicketty, click -- through the wind and the foam  
It's telling the boys over there  
That every 'woolly' that comes from home  
Brings a smile and a hope and a prayer.

Click -- click -- click,  
How they dart and flick,  
Flashing in the firelight to and fro!  
Now for purl and plain,  
Round and round again,  
Knitting love and luck in every row.

**Jessie Pope**

*Jessie Pope was an English poet, writer and journalist, who remains best known for her patriotic motivational poems published during World War I.*

*Wilfred Owen directed his 1917 poem Dulce et Decorum Est at Pope.*

**THE CALL**

Who's for the trench-  
Are you, my laddie?  
Who'll follow French-  
Will you, my laddie?  
Who's fretting to begin,  
Who's going out to win?  
And who wants to save his skin-  
Do you, my laddie?

Who's for the khaki suit-  
Are you, my laddie?  
Who longs to charge and shoot-  
Do you, my laddie?  
Who's keen on getting fit,  
Who means to show his grit,  
And who'd rather wait a bit-  
Would you, my laddie?

Who'll earn the Empire's thanks-  
Will you, my laddie?  
Who'll swell the victor's ranks-  
Will you, my laddie?  
When that procession comes,  
Banners and rolling drums-  
Who'll stand and bite his thumbs-  
Will you, my laddie?

**Jessie Pope**

*Jessie Pope was an English poet, writer and journalist, who remains best known for her patriotic motivational poems published during World War I.*

*Originally published in The Daily Mail; it encouraged enlistment and handed a white feather to youths who would not join the colors. Nowadays, this poetry is considered to be jingoistic, consisting of simple rhythms and rhyme schemes, with extensive use of rhetorical questions to persuade (and sometimes pressure) young men to join the war. Wilfred Owen directed his 1917 poem Dulce et Decorum Est at Pope.*

**THE SECRET**

You were askin' 'ow we sticks it,  
Sticks this blarsted rain and mud,  
'Ow it is we keeps on smilin'  
When the place runs red wi' blood.  
Since you're askin' I can tell ye,  
And I thinks I tells ye true,  
But it ain't official, mind ye,  
It's a tip twixt me and you.  
For the General thinks it's tactics,  
And the bloomin' plans 'e makes.  
And the C.O. thinks it's trainin',  
And the trouble as he takes.  
Sergeant-Major says it's drillin',  
And 'is straffin' on parade,  
Doctor swears it's sanitation,  
And some patent stinks 'e's made.  
Padre tells us its religion,  
And the Spirit of the Lord;  
But I ain't got much religion,  
And I sticks it still, by Gawd.

Quarters kids us it's the rations,  
And the dinners as we gets.  
But I knows what keeps us smilin'  
It's the Woodbine Cigarettes.  
For the daytime seems more dreary,  
And the night-time seems to drag  
To eternity of darkness,  
When ye ave'nt got a fag.  
Then the rain seems some'ow wetter,  
And the cold cuts twice as keen,  
And ye keeps on seein' Boches,  
What the Sargint 'asn't seen.  
If ole Fritz 'as been and got ye,  
And ye 'ave to stick the pain,  
If ye 'aven't got a fag on,  
Why it 'urts as bad again.  
When there ain't no fags to pull at,  
Then there's terror in the ranks.  
That's the secret - (yes, I'll 'ave one)  
Just a fag - and many Tanks.

*The well known poets of the period, such as Owen and Sassoon, were not the only soldiers writing verse during the First World War. A large amount of "trench poetry" and songs was also written by ordinary soldiers (or at least in the style of), often published in trench newsletters and the like. One of the best known of these writers was 'Woodbine Willy', actually Revd. Geoffrey Kennedy MC, CF, who served in the war as a padre.*

**'Woodbine Willy'**

**THE SPIRIT**

When there ain't no gal to kiss you,  
And the postman seems to miss you,  
And the fags have skipped an issue,  
Carry on.

When ye've got an empty belly,  
And the bulley's rotten smelly,  
And you're shivering like a jelly,  
Carry on.

When the Boche has done your chum in,  
And the sergeant's done the rum in,  
And there ain't no rations comin',  
Carry on.

When the world is red and reeking,  
And the shrapnel shells are shrieking,  
And your blood is slowly leaking,  
Carry on.

When the broken battered trenches,  
Are like the bloody butchers' benches,  
And the air is thick with stench,  
Carry on.

Carry on,  
Though your pals are pale and wan,  
And the hope of life is gone,  
Carry on.  
For to do more than you can,  
Is to be a British man,  
Not a rotten 'also ran,'  
Carry on..

**'Woodbine Willy'**

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**NEVER MIND**

If the sergeant drinks your rum, never mind  
 And your face may lose its smile, never mind  
 He's entitled to a tot but not the bleeding lot  
 If the sergeant drinks your rum, never mind

When old Jerry shells your trench, never mind  
 And your face may lose its smile, never mind  
 Though the sandbags bust and fly you have only once to die,  
 If old Jerry shells the trench, never mind

If you get stuck on the wire, never mind  
 And your face may lose its smile, never mind  
 Though you're stuck there all the day, they count you dead and stop your pay  
 If you get stuck on the wire, never mind

If the sergeant says your mad, never mind  
 P'raps you are a little bit, never mind  
 Just be calm don't answer back, cause the sergeant stands no slack  
 So if he says you're mad, well - you are.

*Parody of:*

*Though your heart may ache a while,  
 never mind  
 Though your face may lose its smile,  
 never mind  
 For there's sunshine after rain, and the  
 gladness follows pain.  
 You'll be happy once again, never mind*

**OH IT'S A LOVELY WAR!**

Up to your waist in water, up to your eyes in slush,  
 using the kind of language that makes the sergeant  
 blush,  
 Who wouldn't join the army? That's what we all  
 enquire.  
 Don't we pity the poor civilian sitting by the fire.

*(Chorus)*  
 Oh, oh, oh it's a lovely war.  
 Who wouldn't be a soldier, eh? Oh it's a shame to  
 take the pay.  
 As soon as reveille has gone we feel just as heavy as  
 lead,  
 but we never get up till the sergeant brings our  
 breakfast up to bed.  
 Oh, oh, oh, it's a lovely war.  
 what do we want with eggs and ham when we've got  
 plum and apple jam?  
 Form fours. Right turn. How shall we spend the  
 money we earn?  
 Oh, oh, oh it's a lovely war.

When does a soldier grumble? When does he make a  
 fuss?  
 No one is more contented in all the world than us.  
 Oh it's a cushy life, boys, really we love it so:  
 Once a fellow was sent on leave and simply refused  
 to go.

*(Chorus)*

Come to the cookhouse door, boys, sniff the lovely  
 stew.  
 Who is it says the colonel gets better grub than you?  
 Any complaints this morning? Do we complain? Not  
 we.  
 What's the matter with lumps of onion floating  
 around the tea?

*(Chorus)*

**TO C.A.L.** (The Hon. Charles Alfred Lister)

To have laughed and talked - wise, witty, fantastic, feckless -  
 To have mocked at rules and rulers and learnt to obey,  
 To have led your men with a daring adored and reckless,  
 To have struck your blow for Freedom, the old straight way:

To have hated the world and lived among those who love it,  
 To have thought great thoughts and lived till you knew them true,  
 To have loved men more than yourself and have died to prove it -  
 Yes, Charles, this is to have lived: was there more to do?

**C.A.A.**

*Charles Alfred Lister was the youngest son of Thomas Lister, 4th Baron Ribblesdale. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission record of his death is at Charles Alfred Lister. A collection of his letters and a memoir was published by his father as Charles Lister - Letters and Recollections (1917). Lister's father identifies the author as "the Rev. Cyril Alington, the new Head Master of Eton".*

**FAREWELL**

For the last time, maybe, upon the knoll  
 I stand. The eve is golden, languid, sad.  
 Day like a tragic actor plays his role  
 To the last whispered word and falls gold-clad.  
 I, too, take leave of all I ever had.

They shall not say I went with heavy heart:  
 Heavy I am, but soon I shall be free,  
 I love them all, but oh I now depart  
 A little sadly, strangely, fearfully,  
 As one who goes to try a mystery.

The bell is sounding down in Dedham vale:  
 Be still, O bell: too often standing here  
 When all the air was tremulous, fine and pale,  
 Thy golden note so calm, so still, so clear,  
 Out of my stony heart has struck a tear.

And now tears are not mine. I have release  
 From all the former and the later pain,  
 Like the mid sea I rock in boundless peace  
 Soothed by the charity of the deep-sea rain....  
 Calm rain! Calm sea! Calm found, long sought in vain!

O bronzen pines, evening of gold and blue,  
 Steep mellow slope, brimmed twilit pools below,  
 Hushed trees, still vale dissolving in the dew,  
 Farewell. Farewell. There is no more to do.  
 We have been happy. Happy now I go.

**Robert Nichols**

(Written on Expeditionary Force Leave, 1915)

*Nichols was a Winchester and Oxford-educated Georgian poet. His front-line service was however brief - after just a few weeks serving in the trenches he was invalided with shell shock and sent home to England in 1916. Subsequently serving with the British Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Information, he went on to pen war poetry that he often read to large gatherings, which included tours of the U.S.*

**IF WE RETURN**

by F.W. Harvey

If we return, will England be  
 Just England still to you and me?  
 The place where we must earn our bread?  
 We who have walked among the dead,  
 And watched the smile of agony,  
 And seen the price of Liberty,  
 Which we had taken carelessly  
 From other hands. Nay, we shall dread,  
 If we return,  
 Dread lest we hold blood-guiltily  
 The things that men have died to free.  
 Oh, English fields shall blossom red  
 For all the blood that has been shed  
 By men whose guardians are we,  
 If we return.

**Frederick William Harvey** DCM (26 March 1888 – 13 February 1957), often known as **Will Harvey**, and dubbed "the Laureate of Gloucestershire", was an English poet, broadcaster and solicitor whose poetry became popular during and after WW1. He joined up 4 days after the UK declared war and was posted to France in 1915 and was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Returning home in 1919, he married in 1921, and returned to legal practice. He worked largely as a defence solicitor (his own captivity convincing him that incarceration was destructive and pointless), and became known as the "poor man's solicitor".

"Ducks", Harvey's best known work, was voted one of the nation's 100 favourite poems in 1996 in a nationwide poll conducted by the BBC.

**ABSOLUTION**

by Siegfried Sassoon

The anguish of the earth absolves our eyes  
 Till beauty shines in all that we can see.  
 War is our scourge; yet war has made us wise,  
 And, fighting for our freedom, we are free.

Horror of wounds and anger at the foe,  
 And loss of things desired; all those things must pass.  
 We are the happy legion, for we know  
 Time's but a golden wind that shakes the grass.

There was an hour when we were loath to part  
 From life we longed to share no less than others.  
 Now, having claimed his heritage of heart,  
 What need we more, my comrades and my brothers?

Sassoon was a man who signed up voluntarily – eagerly and who earned the nickname "Mad Jack" in the early days of the war, thanks to his bravery in battle. Written in 1915, Absolution is Sassoon's first complete war poem.

Sassoon said of it: "People used to feel like this when they 'joined up' in 1914 and 1915. No one feels it when they 'go out again'. They only feel, then, a queer craving for 'good old times at Givenchy' etc. But there will always be 'good old times', even for people promoted from inferno to paradise!"

**RELEASE**

by William Noel Hodgson  
(Composed while marching to rest-camp after severe fighting at Loos)

A leaping wind from England,  
The skies without a stain,  
Clean cut against the morning  
Slim poplars after rain,  
The foolish noise of sparrows  
And starlings in a wood -  
After the grime of battle  
We know that these are good.

Death whining down from heaven,  
Death roaring from the ground,  
Death stinking in the nostril,  
Death shrill in every sound,  
Doubting we charged and conquered -  
Hopeless we struck and stood;  
Now when the fight is ended  
We know that it was good.

We that have seen the strongest  
Cry like a beaten child,  
The sanest eyes unholy,  
The cleanest hands defiled,  
We that have known the heart-blood  
Less than the lees of wine,  
We that have seen men broken,  
We know that man is divine.

*William Hodgson was the fourth and youngest child of Henry Bernard Hodgson, the Bishop of Saint Edmundsbury and Ipswich. Hodgson was killed in action on 01/07/1916 aged 23 on the first day of the Somme Offensive. He was awarded the Military Cross and is buried in the Devonshire Cemetery in Mametz.*

**BOMBARDMENT**

Four days the earth was rent and torn  
By bursting steel,  
The houses fell about us;  
Three nights we dared not sleep,  
Sweating, and listening for the imminent crash  
Which meant our death.

The fourth night every man,  
Nerve-tortured, racked to exhaustion,  
Slept, muttering and twitching,  
While the shells crashed overhead.

The fifth day there came a hush;  
We left our holes  
And looked above the wreckage of the earth  
To where the white clouds moved in silent lines  
Across the untroubled blue.

**Richard Aldington**

*An English writer and poet, Aldington was best known for his World War I poetry, the 1929 novel, Death of a Hero, and the controversy arising from his 1955 Lawrence of Arabia: A Biographical Inquiry. His 1946 biography, Wellington, was awarded the James Tait Black Memorial Prize.*

*Aldington, christened Edward Godfree, was born at Portsmouth, Hampshire, England, on July 8, 1892. At an early age, he moved with his mother, Jesse May, and father, middle-class lawyer Albert Edward Aldington, to Dover. There he grew up with his sister Margery and attended preparatory schools, after which he studied for four years at Dover College.*

*Aldington lived in St Richards Road in Deal between 1903 and 1906 and is commemorated with a Deal Society blue plaque.*

*He is one of 16 'Great War' Poets commemorated in Poets Corner at Westminster Abbey.*

**DAWN**

The grim dawn lightens thin bleak clouds;  
In the hill-clefts beyond the flooded meadows  
Lies death-pale, death-still mist.

We trudge along wearily,  
Heavy with lack of sleep,  
Spiritless, yet with pretence of gaiety.

The sun brings crimson to the colourless sky;  
Light gleams from brass and steel—  
We trudge on wearily—

*O God, end this bleak anguish  
Soon, soon, with vivid crimson death,  
End it in mist-pale sleep!*

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**THE KAISER AND BELGIUM**

HE said: "Thou petty people, let me pass.  
What canst thou do but bow to me and kneel?"  
But sudden a dry land caught fire like grass,  
And answer hurtled but from shell and steel.

He looked for silence, but a thunder came  
Upon him, from Liège a leaden hail.  
All Belgium flew up at his throat in flame  
Till at her gates amazed his legions quail.

Take heed, for now on haunted ground they tread;  
There bowed a mightier war lord to his fall:  
Fear! lest that very green grass again grow red  
With blood of German now as then with Gaul.

If him whom God destroys He maddens first,  
Then thy destruction slake thy madman's thirst.

**Stephen Phillips**

*Stephen Phillips 1864 – 1915, was a highly famed English Poet & Dramatist born on 28 July 1864 in Oxford, the eldest of the thirteen children of Stephen Phillips, precentor of Peterborough Cathedral, and his wife, Agatha Sophia, a relative of the Wordsworths.*

*Mr. Phillips, who enjoyed considerable popularity in his lifetime. In his later career he was editor of the Poetry Review from January 1913 until his death in 1915.*

*He lodged and died in Griffin St Deal. A Deal Society Blue Plaque commemorates him.*

**THE HUSH**

There is a hush before the thunder-jar,  
 When white the steeples against purple stand:  
 There is a hush when night with star on star  
 Goes ashen on the summer like a brand.  
 Now a more awful pause appals the soul,  
 When concentrating armies crouch to spring;  
 Stillness more fraught than any thunder-roll,  
 Dawn European with a redder wing.  
 The Teuton host no conscience onward drives;  
 Sullen they come; to slaughter shepherded;  
 Timed for the shambles with unwilling lives,  
 With doubt each soldier is already dead.  
 The massed battalions as a myth shall reel;  
 Vainly they fight, if first they cannot feel.

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**CONVALESCENCE (1914)**

From out the dragging vastness of the sea,  
 Wave-fettered, bound in sinuous seaweed strands,  
 He toils toward the rounding beach, and stands  
 One moment, white and dripping, silently,  
 Cut like a cameo in lazuli,  
 Then falls, betrayed by shifting shells, and lands  
 Prone in the jeering water, and his hands  
 Clutch for support where no support can be.  
 So up, and down, and forward, inch by inch,  
 He gains upon the shore, where poppies glow  
 And sandflies dance their little lives away.  
 The sucking waves retard, and tighter clinch  
 The weeds about him, but the land-winds blow,  
 And in the sky there blooms the sun of May.

**Amy Lowell**

The American Amy Lowell was born in to an affluent Massachusetts family and educated at home and in private schools in Boston. Her financial resources helped her develop a liberated and unconventional life style.

She once remarked that God had made her a businesswoman and she had made herself a poet. Over a relatively brief period she produced over 650 poems but also worked energetically to publicise and promote modern trends in poetry.

She published extensively between 1915 and her death in 1925. In addition to her poetry she lectured, promoted the work of other poets she admired and wrote literary criticism including a lengthy biography of John Keats. She received the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1925 for her collection of poems, What's O'Clock.

**THE SILENT ONE (1917)**

Who died on the wires, and hung there, one of two -  
 Who for his hours of life had chattered through  
 Infinite lovely chatter of Bucks accent:  
 Yet faced unbroken wires; stepped over, and went  
 A noble fool, faithful to his stripes – and ended.  
 But I weak, hungry, and willing only for the chance  
 Of line- to fight in the line, lay down under unbroken  
 Wires, and saw the flashes and kept unshaken,  
 Till the politest voice – a finicking accent, said:  
 'Do you think you might crawl through there: there's a hole.'  
 Darkness, shot at: I smiled, as politely replied –  
 'I'm afraid not, Sir.' There was no hole no way to be seen  
 Nothing but chance of death, after tearing of clothes.  
 Kept flat, and watched the darkness, hearing bullets whizzing –  
 And thought of music – and swore deep heart's deep oaths  
 (Polite to God) and retreated and came on again,  
 Again retreated – and a second time faced the screen.

**Ivor Gurney**

*Gurney was not only a poet but also an extremely gifted composer. Although tormented by mental illness he wrote over two hundred musical pieces and hundreds of poems.*

*Ivor Gurney suffered periods of mental ill health before the First World War but his condition had deteriorated significantly by the end of the conflict. He had joined up after initially being rejected because of his poor eyesight and was subsequently wounded and gassed.*

*At the end of the war he had a number of temporary jobs but his mental instability worsened and he was committed to a mental asylum in 1922. Gurney never fully recovered and died in an asylum in Kent in 1937 from Tuberculosis. He almost certainly suffered from some form of bi-polar disorder.*

**BIRDS IN THE TRENCHES**

by Willoughby Weaving

Ye fearless birds that live and fly where men  
 Can venture not and live, that even build  
 Your nests where oft the searching shrapnel shrilled  
 And conflict rattled like a serpent, when  
 The hot guns thundered further, and from his den  
 The little machine-gun spat, and men fell piled  
 In long-swept lines, as when a scythe has thrilled,  
 And tall corn tumbled ne'er to rise again.

Ye slight ambassadors twixt foe and foe,  
 Small parleyers of peace where no peace is,  
 Sweet disregarders of man's miseries  
 And his most murderous methods, winging slow  
 About your perilous nests - we thank you, so  
 Unconscious of sweet domesticities.

*No Mans Land on many stretches of the Western Front offered an oddly ideal avian habitat, after all few humans ventured there in daylight. The feeling that 'every day might be your last' led to an immense appreciation of everything and a love of birds 'ran like a golden obsessive thread through officers diaries and letters'. The assiduous noting of birdlife was more than a way of passing the hours in the walled world of the trenches.*

*Weaving was born in Ireland in 1895, and educated at Pembroke College in Oxford. He was a protege` of Robert Bridges. He served as a Lieutenant in The Royal Irish Fusiliers on the Western front. His poems were, in the main about nature, the Irish and English countryside. He was wounded in 1915 and invalided home. He died in 1977.*

**THE STRETCHER BEARER (1916)**

My stretcher is one scarlet stain,  
 And as I tries to scrape it clean,  
 I tell you what – I'm sick of pain,  
 For all I've heard, for all I've seen;  
 Around me is the hellish night,  
 And as the war's red rim I trace,  
 I wonder if in Heaven's height  
 Our God don't turn away his face.

I don't care whose the crime may be,  
 I hold no brief for kin or clan;  
 I feel no hate, I only see  
 As man destroys his brother man;  
 I wave no flag, I only know  
 As here beside the dead I wait,  
 A million hearts are weighed with woe,  
 A million homes are desolate.

In dripping darkness far and near,  
 All night I've sought those woeful ones.  
 Dawn suddens up and still I hear  
 The crimson chorus of the guns.  
 Look, like a ball of blood the sun  
 Hangs o'er the scene of wrath and wrong,  
 "Quick! Stretcher-bearers on the run!",  
 Oh Prince of Peace! How long, how long?"

**Tommy Crawford (1897-1980)**

*Tommy Crawford served in the 15th Durham Light Infantry during the First World War and joined the army at just 18 years old. During his time in service he fought in battles at Loos and the Somme. He was injured during the Battle of the Somme in 1916, when a bullet hit his rifle. Discharged on medical grounds, he returned to the North East of England. His poem the 'The Stretcher Bearer' offers a bleak and poignant reflection of the experiences of ordinary soldiers performing medical duties at the frontline.*

**CHANNEL FIRING**

That night your great guns, unawares,  
 Shook all our coffins as we lay,  
 And broke the chancel window-squares,  
 We thought it was the Judgement-day  
 And sat upright. While drearissime  
 Arose the howl of wakened hounds:  
 The mouse let fall the altar-crumbs,  
 The worms drew back into the mounds,  
 The glebe cow drooled. Till God called, 'No;  
 It's gunnery practice out at sea  
 Just as before you went below;  
 The world is as it used to be.'

All nations striving strong to make  
 Red war yet redder. Mad as hatters  
 They do no more for Christ's sake  
 Than you who are helpless in such matters.

'That this is not the judgment-hour  
 For some of them's a blessed thing,  
 For if it were they'd have to scour  
 Hell's floor for so much threatening...

'Ha, ha. It will be warmer when  
 I blow the trumpet (if indeed  
 I ever do; for you are men,  
 And rest eternal sorely need).'

So down we lay again. 'I wonder,  
 Will the world ever saner be,'  
 Said one, 'than when He sent us under  
 In our indifferent century!'

And many a skeleton shook his head.  
 'Instead of preaching forty year,'  
 My neighbour Parson Thirdly said,  
 'I wish I had stuck to pipes and beer.'

Again the guns disturbed the hour,  
 Roaring their readiness to avenge,  
 As far inland as Stourton Tower,  
 And Camelot, and starlit Stonehenge.

**Thomas Hardy**

*Preparations for war included practice firing by British battleships in the English Channel, the noise of which would have carried far inland and been especially noticeable by residents of coastal counties such as Dorset where Hardy lived at the time of writing this poem in 1914.*

**THE GREAT WAR**

So difficult, the war.  
After all, it's all been said,  
All been done and dusted,  
All been screened and read.  
No living left to comfort.  
No comfort for the dead.

**Hilary Clare (b 1950)  
lives in Ivy Place, Deal.**

WWI songs were the ones her  
grandmother sang; her grandfather  
returned from the front with all four  
limbs.

They never spoke of the war.

Now people know all about it, don't  
they, every archival detail.