

Wilfred Owen
Dulce et decorum est
Wrap your mind around these ones!

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1. "Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge."
 - Comment on the very rich imagery of these two lines. (4)
2. "Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs
And towards our distant rest began to trudge."
 - Why are the flares said to be "haunting"? (4)
3. "Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!-- An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time."
 - Is the word "ecstasy" not a rather strange one to use in this context? Why do you think the poet has used it? (4)
4. "Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning."
 - Explain the sustained image used in these two lines. (4)
5. "In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning."
 - Comment on the choice of the words "guttering, choking, drowning". (4)
6. "And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin."
 - What does the poet mean by "His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin"? (4)
7. "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."
 - The poet's selection of words here puts across the theme of this poem in a most dramatic fashion. In what way is this true? (4)
8. "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."
 - Why is "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori" said to be "the old Lie"? (4)
 - Why is "Lie" written with the upper-case "L"? (4)

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