

The background of the cover is a textured, painterly image. The top half shows a hazy, greyish sky over a dark, silhouetted ridge where four soldiers are walking. The bottom half is dominated by a field of bright red poppies growing from a grey, rubble-strewn ground.

THE UNHEARD VOICES OF WAR CONFLICT

YEAR 8 FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH
ANTHOLOGY OF WAR POETRY



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 from prayers or 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 good-byes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of silent maids,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

WILFRED OWEN

(1893-1918)

Year 8 students found out how First World War poems create impact, rouse different emotions, and make people reflect on human behaviour during wartime.

By exploring the language and techniques used in war poems, they then wrote their own poems in response to the 'Never Such Innocence' competition which aims to give children and young people a voice on conflict and its impact.



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Death in Disguise

War is a friend of mine,

Blood is my companion

Providing me with poor souls, hearts black as coal

Trapped in an empty hole, my one and only role

A burning agony envelops those wounded soldiers,

making them tremble like little children on their first day at
school,

I smile in delight

I'm the shadow they all fear of,

I'm the dark cloud stooping over them,

sucking the life out of them

I'm the one creeping into their dreams,



haunting them with an eerie darkness

There are the bold and brave ones though,

who fear me not

Their time will come all right

For I'm very patient indeed

Some try to avoid me,

some try to escape my door, poor victims

I'll prove them wrong,

Because they aren't beyond

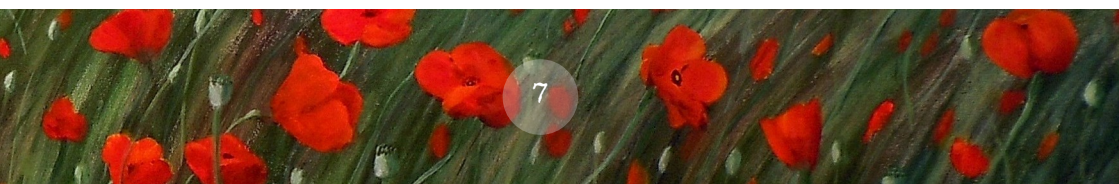
the clutches of the Grim Reaper

They think so much of themselves

They've got to be reminded,

the world's a big chessboard

and they're merely pawns





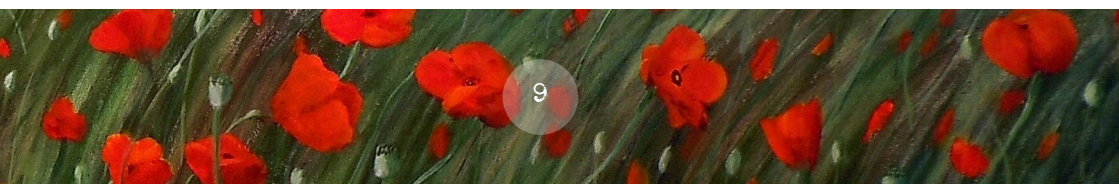
War is a friend of mine,
My closest friend of all
All those young men standing proudly in the front line,
gun in hand, posture upright
Thinking it's an honour to fight for their country
They're such fools
For they have fallen into my trap

Bang, bang, bang,
the piercing sound of gunshot
is music to my ears
when panic surrounds the air,
it's my chance to seize as many as I can,
and take them to the place of no return



War is a friend of mine,
All this conflict and chaos is surely my cup of tea
But blame me not,
I do feel pity for their bitter destiny
But I can save them not,
For I am Death in a bloody, muddy coat

Valentina Kiliorides





Once Upon a War

War

War terminates in pain and misery,

War is the opposite of love,

War is the opposite of me,

War is my rival.

Life

Life is hope,

Life is faith and joy as well,

Life encompasses us every day,

Life brings smiles on children's faces.



Death

Death is my sea of grief,

Death is my hatred,

Death is my bullet,

Death is my halt.

Soldiers

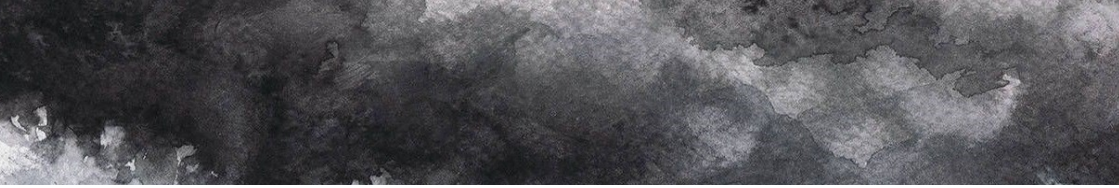
Soldiers pour out their blood for their country,

Soldiers go through affliction,

Soldiers are not jubilant like this,

Soldiers merit a life not a death.





Darkness

Darkness lacks light,

Darkness is like a flower losing its petals

Darkness came over them once,

Darkness is in war.

The end

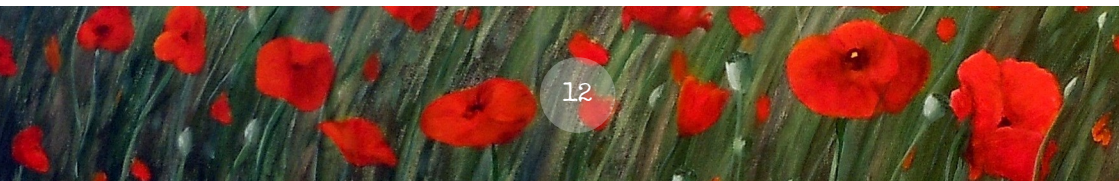
They died in pain,


They died in distress,

They died with unaccomplished wishes for life,

They died knowing this day would come.

Ashtyn Gulley





Chaos



The battle commenced with a rain of bombs
showering the ground with terror,
Then, gas was tossed around,
And stormtroopers appeared,
Their faces behind masks,
Expressing no emotion.

Slowly, looking high into the sky
Remembering my time of prime,
When I was still laughing, loving, living life,
When the beautiful bluebirds brought joy,
When the flowers still bloomed,
And the sunshine still smiled.



Blasts all around the city
Got filled with fear.
Chaos spread like wildfire,
Covering the air,
While terrified, innocent people,
run in despair.

Now, glancing back up,
The stars, stopped sparkling,
The sun has hidden,
The clouds have smeared,
The people, disappeared.

All left, are bodies and remains,
looking like a graveyard,

Lying down, surrendered, out of breath,
Knowing that time might fix the damage,
But time won't fix my pain.



Oleksandr Korpanyuk



They Are Soldiers

They came youthful and optimistic.

They came lively and cheerful.

They came without a blemish.

They came ready to challenge the opposed.

They fought long and diligently.

They fought panic-stricken and cold.


They fought in trenches flooded.

They fought until they couldn't anymore.

They died in agony.

They died in valour.

They died with so much unfinished.



They died too soon.



They left as a team of veterans with pride.

They left in a procession of injuries and scars.

They left some of them never to see again.

They left many lifelessly sprawled in the fields.

Elizabeth Wright



The War's Anonymous Martyr

He walks alone, among the others,
Determined to prevail;
Slogging through the malicious blizzard,
Heaving in the whistling gail;
His figure distorted,
His soul aborted;
And yet, he makes another step,
To sacrifice and glory;
The war's anonymous martyr,
Whose name shall never be revealed.

The moon, like a floodlight,
Illuminates his path;

Giving him hope,
That this battle might be the last;
His perception obscured,
His ordeal endured;
And yet, he marches with pride,
To his destiny;
The war's anonymous martyr,
Whose name shall never be revealed.




Ioanna Arvanitaki



Abyss

A faint light in the distance blinded me,
'Death,' I thought, 'Finally it has come',
But no, that was not it,
It was the light of life,
I would have indulged myself in the brightness,
but the more I tried, the deeper I fell into an ocean of loneliness and sorrow.

I struggled onward, as the thunder boomed and roared in the distance,
The sun had lost its light and my world was just darkness now,
Yet I moved forward, like a half-dead animal fleeing from the hunter,



I dared not open my eyes, afraid of what I might find,
After all, I did not need to,
I already knew what had happened.



I felt like it was all my fault,
The blood of all my friends was on my hands,
They all gleefully gave up their lives for me,
I wish they had not,
The despair and the grief felt like a heavy cloud on my head,
One that would never clear away.

I surpassed the guilt and the fear deep inside me,
And opened my eyes,
It was empty, as empty as the sea,



And I was merely but a fish swimming with no sense of direction,

Voices in my head kept on saying 'Your fault, your fault, your fault,' and I listened,

As they pushed me into an abyss of guilt and had me fall until my spirit and soul were broken.

Yet, I would not give up,

I would not let go of hope,

And I would not let my friends die in vain,

For, they gave up their own lives for me,

And pulled me out of the abyss.

Yana Danina

Despair



Her pale face drowning with sorrow

Her whole wide world was just lost in the darkness

She was wondering would she be able to wake up on the mor-
row?

Her last moments with him were all blurred

Big tears dripping from her red, tortured eyes

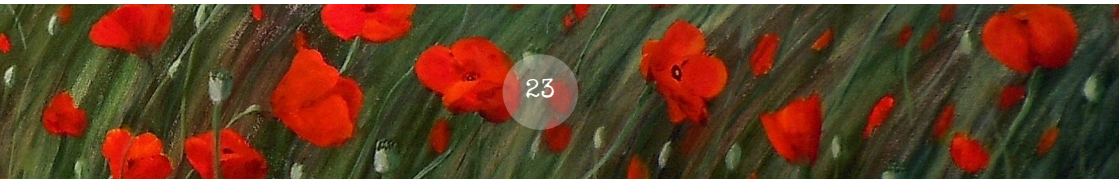
A dull thought surrounded her,

Her heart shattered into a million pieces

Watching his soul slowly fade away

Her heart was beating harder than ever

She slowly realised he would disappear forever





The atmosphere as dark as the fumes
from the poor burning souls that were lost
Blood spread around filling the air with misery
And covering the ground with despair

She knows she will never see him in this world
Would she ever have a flicker of hope
Of reuniting with him in the next?

Elisa Prudentino

Time Won't Heal the Pain



As I observe the slaughter around me in distress,
my eyes water and my heart sinks in the chaos,
it does not fill with sorrow but with endless despair,
despair of a war that shall never end.

Decaying corpses and bodies scattered on the ground,
alone to leave their last breath helpless in excruciating pain,
no dignity left as they shall lie there with no one to mourn for
them,
condemned to a tragic end without victory or loss.

Who will claim responsibility
and who shall take the blame,



time will cover these atrocities

but time won't heal the pain.

The nauseating smell of blood makes my spine shiver,

the noises of gunfire pierce my eardrums irreparably,

I know I shall forever hear these noises in my sleep,

my skin will always smell, the smell of death.

Death knocking menacingly on my front door,

despair, death, deprivation, depression, demoralisation, destruction,

better to kill than to be killed,

portraits and images that will scar its victims for life.

Who will claim responsibility

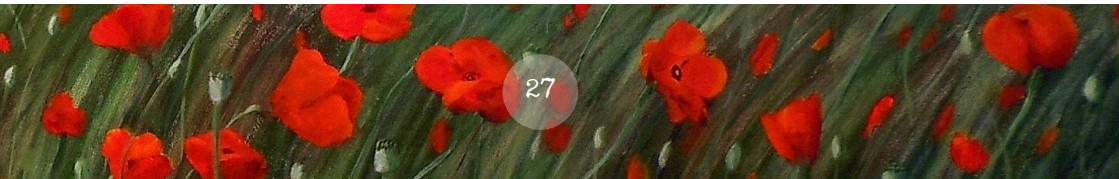
and who shall take the blame,



time will cover these atrocities
but time won't heal the pain.



Elias Stone





BOOM!

The final bomb has hit
Everything damaged, everything gone,
Everything blown to the ground.
Soldiers broken and bruised.
Soldiers wailing and waiting,
Waiting for their faith to be sealed.
Corpses laying like fallen statues,
Blood draining into the defeated grounds.

The bright blue sky disappeared behind the smoke
The dark grey blanket covered the land.
The winds dancing with confusion while soldiers search for
solutions,



A solution to repair their shattered hearts and souls.

The gates of heavens widening to welcome the sacrificed.

The dead died in vain,

No ceremony, no wake,

Only left on the ground to decay.

All the dead are reuniting in paradise,

Looking down at the horror that they left.

The ones who survived are no different from the dead.

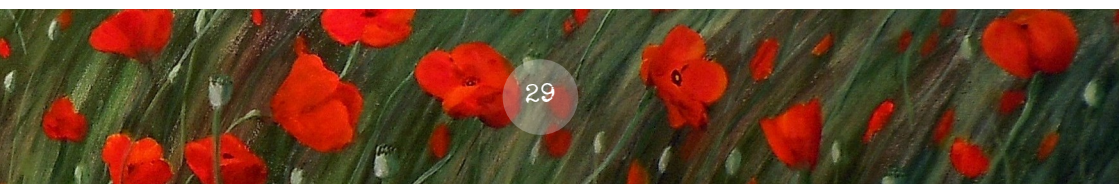
Their faces pale like their partners' corpse.

Soldiers blind,

Soldiers lost,

Soldiers suffering silently.

Their last moments were spent together.





They all lined up one after the other
All beginning to sob silently.

Afraid to let their guards down.

In silence, they admired the dead,

Heads down blocking their view,

Trying to forget what they have witnessed.

all that was heard and all that was done.

Their souls were shattering,

Their hearts bleeding with sorrow remembering their fellow
companions.

At the end both teams have lost their world

Their stories have been lost in history,

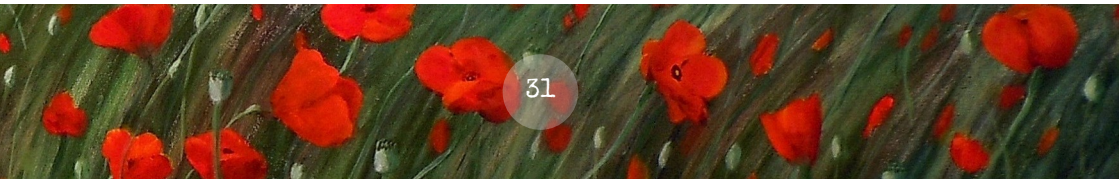
Their voices hushed with misery.



Hope was not found but will gradually rise like the sun,
Their futures, their families, and their friends all destroyed,
Yet hope will rise to mend the broken souls.
This is all because of the final bomb
that struck,
'BOOM!'



Melice Dayekh






Silence at Last

Among the shrunken corpses on the bloody field,
Praying on their ancestors' mighty shield,
The savage men charging like a pack of wolves,
Horses galloping furiously with their stamping hooves.

Slash and slash their viciously sentient swords go,
While their earthly bodies move to and fro,
'Oh Lord!' they breathlessly shout,
Who knew they would end up in nature's ghastly blackout.

Maliciously fighting in the breeze of the night,
The valiant knights who don't wear tights,
Heroically give up their lives,
While holding up their ferocious knives.

The picturesque sunrise victoriously comes out,
'Oh Lord!' they breathlessly shout,



This stormy period of their life was almost over,
Almost like finding a four-leaf clover.



They've won!
They've won!
Shout their wives from their homes,
Alongside their garden gnomes.

As the men victoriously return,
With the girls that wear shiny black pearls,
BOOM, and silence rules the country,
How could they have known?

Christina Palamidi



Dead Nature

The broken sun, the God of light,
Throws golden angels to the earth,
The thin white ribbons of their wings
Shine on the plain of morn.

The trees, like women with no hands,
Stand, bathing in the steady light,
Forever lowering their heads -
The dead shall never smile.

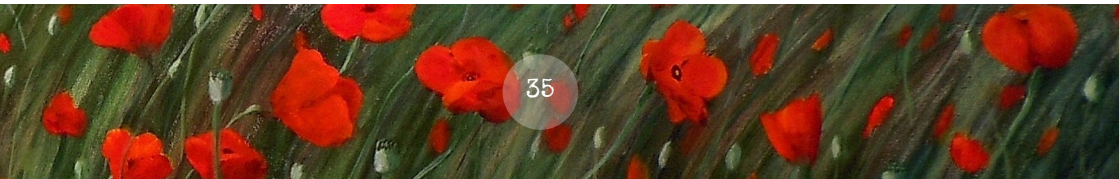
The long and narrow winding road,
That stretched its coils around the land
Halfway to the horizon, rests
In its eternal sleep.



Thin clouds drift along the sky –
As slowly as the world itself
Moves, just to face the outstretched void
And see the Sun next time.

The pond aside the road is clear,
Just like the first tear of a child,
And, like a mirror, it reflects
The misery around.

The little pond has seen it all –
The sun, the trees, the road and clouds,
Has seen the calm and yet depressed
Attraction of death.






The never-moving road's disturbed
By heavy steps of those men who
Have killed other men in war
For glory of their land.

Their uniforms are heavy, yes,
But what they carry has more weight
Than anything which ever has
Existed on Earth.

The cold and stiff corpse of the man
Who has defended land with them
And has become so close to them
Is what they carry now.



The faces of the men are calm
And seem to carefully be carved,
Like faces of the statues, which
Were shapeless blocks of stone.



Their pace is slow, for they all know
There's no need to escape this land.
But in their eyes and in their soul
There's deeply buried pain.

He's been so young when he first took
A heavy rifle in his hands
And praised his Motherland in hope
Of soon and easy win.



But hopes have shattered like thin glass
When he was shot straight in his chest.
The fatal blow, the agony
Have broken him up at once.

The rattle of the battlefield
Had never stopped, as if the life
Of that quiet man meant nothing to
None of the living men.

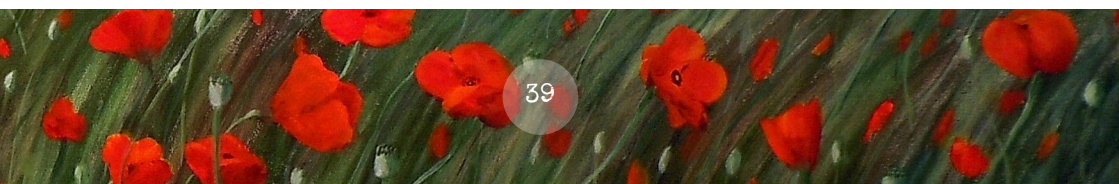
They all remembered that hard time,
The distant taste of blood on tongues,
The bodies of the ones that were
Alive a while ago.



They all remember, but don't speak,
For they don't know the words to say,
So they just keep their steady trot
Along the long dead road.

The sad black trees stare at their backs,
The pond reflects their blurry shapes,
And all of them too seem to mourn –
They can't feel... but once have felt.

Sasha Lubnina






Raging War

Wars rage on, soldiers fight.

We pray for the safety of our loved ones, their only photos
shattered into a million
tear-stained fragments.

We sing melancholy songs for the nightingales who swoop
through the sky
carrying our whispers of encouragement up, up, up to heaven,
where our lost ones frolic in a land unlike the one below,
so consumed with rage, hatred, and greed.

Though the thought of not seeing Fredric is defeating,
but to yet know his nimble featherly wings will cushion me is
relieving



We sigh but he dies, on the pathway pigmented with crimson
blood.



Slashes brush the tips of the ground,

When would this ache fade away?

The orange gold stretches far and wide, the colour of fire
hearths and tangerines.

It is but the reflection of the dawn,

the promise of the rising sun that comes after the velvety night
has had its say and the land has rested once more.

Silence suffocated the air.

'Wonderful,' all exclaimed,

Their eyes revealed nothing but a diaphanous sight,

Of proud trees,

A clear sky, some things that were missed dearly.



'We've won, we've won!' they sang 'Oh golly, we've won!'

Marching home to smell the dough, to see the ones you lost
hope,

All so felt effortlessly so real.

But wait – where is dear mother wrapped around my arms?

Who is this laying in my arms, his colour slowly fading?

The bombs never stopped,

Don't let a dream ever so deceive you,

It could be a trap.

Maira Kotsoliou



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 gas-shells dropping softly 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.

"Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori" (Latin)
from Ode III.2.13 by the Roman poet Horace
"It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country"

WILFRED OWEN
(1893–1918)

THE REAR-GUARD

(Hindenburg Line, April 1917)

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 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 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 of horror in his hair,
He climbed through darkness to the twilight air,
Unloading hell behind him step by step.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

(1886-1967)



GRASS

Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo.
Shovel them under and let me work—

I am the grass; I cover all.

And pile them high at Gettysburg
And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.
Shovel them under and let me work.

Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:

What place is this?

Where are we now?

I am the grass.

Let me work.

CARL SANDBURG

(1878–1967)





~~ALL WE ARE SAYING~~
IS GIVE PEACE A CHANCE

JOHN LENNON

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