


# Wilfred Owen: Investigating *Greater Love*

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### Love

#### Investigating *Greater Love*

- ❖ In *Greater Love* Owen celebrates camaraderie: the relationship on the field of battle between comrades in arms. Compare *Greater Love* with *At a Calvary near the Ancre*.
  - How does Owen present the concept of 'greater love' in these two poems?
- ❖ Look at *The Dead Beat* and *S.I.W.* and see how the presentation of love there compares to what you have noted in *Greater Love* and *At a Calvary near the Ancre*.

#### Investigating language and tone in *Greater Love*

- ❖ In *Greater Love* Owen states that God seems not to care and yet at the same time he seems to be endorsing the words of Christ about self-sacrifice for the love of others. Remind yourself of the poem *Soldier's Dream*. How does Owen differentiate between Jesus and God in this poem?
- ❖ Remind yourself of the poem *Exposure*.
  - What are the similarities between *Exposure* and *Greater Love*?

#### Investigating structure and versification in *Greater Love*

- ❖ In *Greater Love* Owen uses a simple structure to explore the differences between conventional love and the greater love for which a man dies for his friends. Take a sheet of A4 paper and fold it in half vertically. Head up one column 'Romantic love'; the other 'Greater Love'.
  - Fold your sheet in four horizontally to create a space for each stanza and use this pro-forma to note the way in which Owen uses each verse to explore the differences between the two types of love.

#### Investigating imagery and symbolism in *Greater Love*

- ❖ Owen's imagery in *Greater Love* illustrates in stark detail the horrors of the warfare, as he also does in *Dulce et Decorum Est*. Look for similarities between the two poems.
- ❖ *Disabled* is also a poem in which Owen uses graphic detail of injuries. Compare this with *Greater Love*.

#### Investigating themes in *Greater Love*

- ❖ Owen said that his poems were about the pity of war and that the poetry was in the pity. However, the great Irish poet W. B. Yeats said of Owen's poetry that it was all 'blood, dust and sucked sugar stick'. Examine the themes in *Greater Love* from Owen's viewpoint.
  - How far does greater love provide evidence to support W.B. Yeats' view?