

# Wilfred Owen: Investigating *Soldier's Dream*

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### Dream

#### Investigating *Soldier's Dream*

- ❖ The title of the poem is *Soldier's Dream*. Discuss who you think that soldier is who has such a dream.
  - Is this dream Owen's dream, the dream of one man or the dream of all who serve in wars?
- ❖ Owen based the poem on a fundamental split between God the Father and God the Son. In what way does this poem remind you of *The Parable of the Old Man and the Young*?
  - Look at how the two poems are different.

#### Investigating language and tone in *Soldier's Dream*

- ❖ Owen's choice of words is important in this poem. His diction when he writes about the war is very different from when he writes about the tension between God and Jesus. Make a list of the details of war.
  - How does the language work in the poem?
- ❖ Make a list of the characteristics of God, Jesus and Michael.
  - How does Owen make us feel about each of them?

#### Investigating structure and versification in *Soldier's Dream*

- ❖ Although Jesus destroys weapons both 'ours' and 'theirs' there is a suggestion in the last line that Michael, following God's command, has seen only to 'our' repairs. Is this significant?
  - If so, what was Owen saying about the war in the last line?

#### Investigating imagery and symbolism in *Soldier's Dream*

- ❖ Some critics find the poem unconvincing. It is in their view 'whimsical and quirky'. What is your feeling about the poem?
  - Is there a way in which it 'jars' on you?
- ❖ Would you agree that *Soldier's Dream* is very much a 'one off' poem, that Owen never writes anything else remotely like it?
- ❖ Look at *Soldier's Dream* alongside *At a Calvary near the Ancre* and *Le Christianisme*.
  - Compare Owen's use of the figure of Christ in all three of these poems.

#### Investigating themes in *Soldier's Dream*

- ❖ Dreams figure in many of Owen's poems. The real longing for peace in this poem is expressed in a dream. Remind yourself of *Strange Meeting* which also is about a dream.
  - How different is the message in that lengthy and complex poem to the theme of *Soldier's Dream*?
- ❖ Remind yourself of the poem *Exposure* in which the soldiers dream of home.
  - How does Owen create the pity and the poetry in each of *Soldier's Dream*, *Strange Meeting* and *Exposure*?