


Wilfred Owen: Investigating *Strange Meeting*

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- ❖ 'Yet these elegies are not to this generation, this is in no sense consolatory. They may be to the next. All a poet can do today is to warn. That is why the true Poets must be truthful.' (From Owen's planned introduction to his poetry.) What do you think Owen meant by consolatory?
 - Why would he not want his poems to be seen in that way?
- ❖ What does *Strange Meeting* add to our understanding of what Owen meant when he said all a poet can do is to warn?
 - What truths are told in this poem?
- ❖ Sassoon thought that this poem would seal Owen's reputation as a poet. What do you see to be the greatness of this poem?
 - Why do you think this is it sometimes described as Owen's best poem?
- ❖ What are the difficulties of *Strange Meeting*?

Investigating language and tone in *Strange Meeting*

- ❖ Dylan Thomas described Owen as 'a poet for all time, all places, and all wars. There is only one war, that of men against men.' From your reading of *Strange Meeting* how far do you feel this poem goes to supporting Thomas' view?

Investigating structure and versification in *Strange Meeting*

- ❖ Owen's use of pararhyme makes *Strange Meeting* a very individual poem. Make a list of the pararhymes in the poem, using colours to identify the shared sounds.
 - Can you find examples of when the pararhymes Owen uses in *Strange Meeting* create a drop in pitch or dissonance?

Investigating imagery and symbolism in *Strange Meeting*

- ❖ The power of this poem lies in Owen's use of symbolic language rather than in his creation of imagery. How far do you agree with this statement?
 - Why do you think that Owen felt that the poem needed symbols?

Investigating themes in *Strange Meeting*

- ❖ This, of all Owen's poems, most strongly carries the theme of the pity of war and the idea that 'the poetry is in the pity.' Make a list of quotations from this poem which you could use in any essay on the way in which Owen presents the poetry through the pity, rather than the pity through the poetry.
 - Use two or three of the quotations you have chosen to make a statement about Owen's claim that 'the poetry is in the pity.'