

# Wilfred Owen, Selected Poems:

## c)i Voices

 refers to links on [www.crossref-it.info](http://www.crossref-it.info)

<p><b>Inspection</b></p> <p>'You! What d'you mean by this?' I rapped.          'You dare come on parade like this?'          'Please, sir, it's---' ' 'Old yer mouth,' the sergeant snapped.          'I takes 'is name, sir?'---'Please, and then dismiss.'</p> <p>Some days 'confined to camp' he got, (5)          For being 'dirty on parade'.          He told me, afterwards, the damnèd spot          Was blood, his own. 'Well, blood is dirt,' I said.</p> <p>'Blood's dirt,' he laughed, looking away,          Far off to where his wound had bled (10)          And almost merged for ever into clay.          'The world is washing out its stains,' he said.          'It doesn't like our cheeks so red:          Young blood's its great objection.          But when we're duly white-washed, being dead, (15)          The race will bear Field Marshal God's inspection.'</p>	<p><b>The Last Laugh</b></p> <p>'Oh! Jesus Christ! I'm hit,' he said; and died.          Whether he vainly cursed or prayed indeed,              The Bullets chirped---In vain, vain, vain!              Machine-guns chuckled---Tut-tut! Tut-tut!              And the Big Gun guffawed. (5)</p> <p>Another sighed---'O Mother,---Mother,---Dad!'          Then smiled at nothing, childlike, being dead.              And the lofty Shrapnel-cloud              Leisurely gestured,---Fool!              And the splinters spat, and tittered. (10)</p> <p>'My Love!' one moaned. Love-languid seemed his mood,          Till slowly lowered, his whole face kissed the mud.              And the Bayonets' long teeth grinned;              Rabbles of Shells hooted and groaned;              And the Gas hissed. (15)</p>
<p><b>The Dead-Beat</b></p> <p>He dropped,---more sullenly than wearily,          Lay stupid like a cod, heavy like meat,          And none of us could kick him to his feet;          ---Just blinked at my revolver, blearily;          ---Didn't appear to know a war was on, (5)          Or see the blasted trench at which he stared.          'I'll do 'em in,' he whined. 'If this hand's spared,          I'll murder them, I will.'</p> <p>A low voice said,          'It's Blighty, p'raps, he sees; his pluck's all gone,          (10)          Dreaming of all the valiant, that aren't dead:          Bold uncles, smiling ministerially;          Maybe his brave young wife, getting her fun          In some new home, improved materially.          It's not these stiff's have crazed him; nor the Hun.'          (15)</p> <p>We sent him down at last, out of the way.          Unwounded;---stout lad, too, before that strafe.          Malingerer? Stretcher-bearers winked, 'Not half!'</p> <p>Next day I heard the Doc's well-whiskied laugh:          'That scum you sent last night soon died. Hooray!'          (20)</p>	<p><b>The Letter</b></p> <p>With B.E.F. June 10. Dear Wife,          (Oh blast this pencil. 'Ere, Bill, lend's a knife.)          I'm in the pink at present, dear.          I think the war will end this year.          We don't see much of them square-'eaded 'Uns.          (5)          We're out of harm's way, not bad fed.          I'm longing for a taste of your old buns.          (Say, Jimmie, spare's a bite of bread.)          There don't seem much to say just now.          (Yer what? Then don't, yer ruddy cow! (10)          And give us back me cigarette!)          I'll soon be 'ome. You mustn't fret.          My feet's improvin', as I told you of.          We're out in rest now. Never fear.          (VRACH! By crumbs, but that was near.) (15)          Mother might spare you half a sov.          Kiss Nell and Bert. When me and you---          (Eh? What the 'ell! Stand to? Stand to!          Jim, give's a hand with pack on, lad.          Guh! Christ! I'm hit. Take 'old. Aye, bad. (20)          No, damn your iodine. Jim? 'Ere!          Write my old girl, Jim, there's a dear.)</p>

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### Wild with All Regrets

*To Siegfried Sassoon*

My arms have mutinied against me -- brutes!  
My fingers fidget like ten idle brats,  
My back's been stiff for hours, damned hours.  
Death never gives his squad a Stand-at-ease.  
I can't read. There: it's no use. Take your book. (5)  
A short life and a merry one, my buck!  
We said we'd hate to grow dead old. But now,  
Not to live old seems awful: not to renew  
My boyhood with my boys, and teach 'em hitting,  
Shooting and hunting, -- all the arts of hurting! (10)  
-- Well, that's what I learnt. That, and making money.  
Your fifty years in store seem none too many;  
But I've five minutes. God! For just two years  
To help myself to this good air of yours!  
One Spring! Is one too hard to spare? Too long? (15)  
Spring air would find its own way to my lung,  
And grow me legs as quick as lilac-shoots.

Yes, there's the orderly. He'll change the sheets  
When I'm lugged out, oh, couldn't I do that?  
Here in this coffin of a bed, I've thought (20)  
I'd like to kneel and sweep his floors for ever, --  
And ask no nights off when the bustle's over,  
For I'd enjoy the dirt; who's prejudiced  
Against a grimed hand when his own's quite dust, --  
Less live than specks that in the sun-shafts turn? (25)  
Dear dust, -- in rooms, on roads, on faces' tan!  
I'd love to be a sweep's boy, black as Town;  
Yes, or a muckman. Must I be his load?  
A flea would do. If one chap wasn't bloody,  
Or went stone-cold, I'd find another body. (30)

Which I shan't manage now. Unless it's yours.  
I shall stay in you, friend, for some few hours.  
You'll feel my heavy spirit chill your chest,  
And climb your throat on sobs, until it's chased  
On sighs, and wiped from off your lips by wind. (35)

I think on your rich breathing, brother, I'll be weaned  
To do without what blood remained me from my wound.