

## WILFRED OWEN

He was born into a middle class family in 1893. He was an English teacher in France but, after a visit to a hospital, he decided to **enlist** and go back to England. After that he was sent to France, he was hit by a shell and went to a hospital near Edinburg, where he met **Siegfried Sassoon** (famous poet) who encouraged him to continue writing, so he did that from August 1917 to September 1918 because he returned to the front. On the 4<sup>th</sup> November he was killed by a German machine. His poem's subject was the **pity of the War**, like he declared in the preface to the collection **Disabled and Other Poems** "My subject is War, and the pity of War".

STYLE → Accurate description of gas casualties (victims), soldiers who lost their mind and men whose bodies have been torn (lacerato) apart. He used assonance and alliteration to give moral force and he introduced "**pararhymes**" to give an effect of disharmony (moan, mourn) half-rhymes where the consonants in two different words are the same but the vowels vary.

## WAR POETS

The Battle of Somme in 1916 awaked lots of **doubts** in the people, starting from a group of soldiers. Other soldiers instead wanted the conflict and, in most cases, ended their lives in the war, awakening the **consciousness** of the readers. They were the war poets and the most influential ones were Brooke, Owen, Sassoon and Rosenberg; some of them found new modality of writing.

## DULCE ET DECORUM EST

Owen wrote this poem to denounce and inform about the pity of the war. He wrote about his personal experience in the trenches of rain and mud, decaying bodies, repeated bombings and the use of poison gas. He thought that all a poet could do was to warn other people about the horror of the war. In the first section the poet described the difficulty **setting** where soldiers had to stay: he compared them to "*old beggars*" and "*hags*" because of their conditions of life between sacks, mud, sludge and bombs. The second section describes the **dramatic part** of the poem: soldiers are attacked by *asphyxiating grenades*. The poet is concerned in describing a **haunting recurrent dream** about his companion who died. The last section is full of irony and resumes the quotations about Horace "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori", which he defines as an old lie. Alternating rhymes, brutal language and "I" that becomes "you" to accuse the pity of the war.

**RUPERT BROOKE** → He was born in 1887 into a wealthy family, he was educated at Rugby School and went to King's College. He enlisted in the Royal Navy in WWI but died of septicemia in April 1915 while sailing for the Dardanelles. He was buried on the Greek island of Skyros.

POEMS: "*1914 and Other poems*" is his most famous sequence of five sonnets in which he claimed that war is clean and cleansing because dying in war is honorable and respectable. "THE SOLDIER" → This sonnet is centered in the theme of war, in particular in England. It is written in first person; some themes are the rivers, flowers/love, suns of home. Laughter with friends. COMPARISON WITH UNGARETTI, "SOLDATI" AND "FIUMI"

## T.S ELIOT

T.S Eliot was born in **St Louis in Missouri** in 1888. He studied at Harvard and Oxford and, when World War I broke out he decided to settle in London and become a clerk (impiegato) in a bank. His collection of poems **Prufrock and Other Observation** 1917 gained him important recognition as an avant-garde poet; he founded **The Criterion**, a magazine of European literature. He was unhappily married to a British ballet dancer and he suffered from a nervous breakdown, in fact *The Waste Land* was written while he was recovering in a Swiss sanatorium in Lausanne. Poetry was his only refuge. He started going to churches in order to find answers, so he wrote **Murder in the Cathedral** (assassination of Thomas Becket). He was also a literary critic and he analyzed the importance of impersonal writing. In 1948 he won a **Nobel prize for literature** and he died in London in 1965.

### THE WASTE LAND SECTIONS:

1. The Burial of the Death: opposition of sterility and fertility, life and death
2. A Game of Chess: juxtaposition of present squalor and past splendour
3. The Fire Sermon: present alienation
4. Death by Water: Phlebas, the Phoenician sailor who died by drowning
5. What the Thunder Said: evokes religions and sympathy with other human beings

### STYLE

*The Waste Land* is a **modern poem** that breaks away of any order, in which the main themes are the collapse of civilization and the despair of living in a modern alienated world. The poem is dramatic and the speaking is related to multiple personalities. The poet used lots of quotations from many literary works. This use of **quotations** reflects the idea that T.S had of history: it was a repetition of the same events or places, and classicism saw the past as a concrete premise for the present. Present and past exist **simultaneously**, in fact we have **shifts in time** and space created by free associations of ideas.

Blank verses, the quatrain and free verses; Eliot wanted the public to participate, so he adopted the Technique of implication and the repetition of words and images for the musicality of the poem.

OBJECTIVE CORRELATIVE	JUXTAPOSITION
Metaphors and symbols replace direct statements. The use of a sequence of events, cluster of images or a setting in order to describe a certain emotion and evoke it.	The use of a person, concept, place or idea to another in order to highlight the contrast between the two and compare them.

The Modernist revolution had been growing over the last two decades of the 19th century, which provided a **crisis of Victorian values and morality**. People felt a sense of disillusionment and precariousness, so nothing seemed real or certain; moreover scientists discovered the **theory of relativity by Einstein** and the unconscious by Freud, which changed the concept of space and time. General crisis of Western and old values together with the preference of **short and meaningful images** that could provide a true insight into the nature of things; past could be remoulded in a personal way.

### THE FIRE SERMON

It is a description of modern-day decadence, where sex is sold cheap and is no longer viewed as a spiritual union sealing the holy rite of marriage. April is the cruelest month

mixing memory and desire. Quotations by indian philosophy, Ovidio, Dante and Huysmans. In his poem Eliot denounced the corruption of the modern society, a new alienated world, impossibility to feel any emotion, sense of detachment... **Contrast** between the the fertility of a mythical past and the spiritual sterility of the present, the collapse of civilisation, the despair of living in a modern **alienated world**. The speaking voice is related to a multiple personality beyond the limits of space and time. The fire sermon describes a situation from the point of view of Tiresias, a mythical figure who is blind but can foresee the future, he is a man but at the same time a woman (Punishment of the Gods). A **young typist** is doing houseworks waiting for her lover, a dull and slightly arrogant **clerk**. Main action: a loveless sexual encounter between this couple. At the end the typist is glad the encounter is over and done.

ELIOT	MONTALE
Description of the places, dying people and war poets. Never chance to change this land or try it. Changing the present is our own responsibility thanks to the past. City environment	ossi di seppia e dying people. Thunderstorms and the possibility to change your life. Voyage=life. Nervous, ordinary life comes back. Natural environment

Sterility in life by the sexual encounter and the thunderstorm. The objective correlative.

*TEXT: THE FIRE SERMON*

Humans are compared to an engine. Tiresias (mid man mid woman) who is blind and a typist, who is bored and tired, are trying to have an intercourse, but they don't feel any type of feelings they feel detached.