**Love among the Ruins**

BY [ROBERT BROWNING](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/robert-browning)

Where the quiet-coloured end of evening smiles,

Miles and miles

On the solitary pastures where our sheep

Half-asleep

Tinkle homeward thro' the twilight, stray or stop

As they crop—

Was the site once of a city great and gay,

(So they say)

Of our country's very capital, its prince

Ages since

Held his court in, gathered councils, wielding far

Peace or war.

Now the country does not even boast a tree,

As you see,

To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain rills

From the hills

Intersect and give a name to, (else they run

Into one)

Where the domed and daring palace shot its spires

Up like fires

O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall

Bounding all

Made of marble, men might march on nor be prest

Twelve abreast.

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass

Never was!

Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'er-spreads

And embeds

Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,

Stock or stone—

Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe

Long ago;

Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread of shame

Struck them tame;

And that glory and that shame alike, the gold

Bought and sold.

Now—the single little turret that remains

On the plains,

By the caper overrooted, by the gourd

Overscored,

While the patching houseleek's head of blossom winks

Through the chinks—

Marks the basement whence a tower in ancient time

Sprang sublime,

And a burning ring, all round, the chariots traced

As they raced,

And the monarch and his minions and his dames

Viewed the games.

And I know, while thus the quiet-coloured eve

Smiles to leave

To their folding, all our many-tinkling fleece

In such peace,

And the slopes and rills in undistinguished grey

Melt away—

That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair

Waits me there

In the turret whence the charioteers caught soul

For the goal,

When the king looked, where she looks now, breathless, dumb

Till I come.

But he looked upon the city, every side,

Far and wide,

All the mountains topped with temples, all the glades'

Colonnades,

All the causeys, bridges, aqueducts,—and then

All the men!

When I do come, she will speak not, she will stand,

Either hand

On my shoulder, give her eyes the first embrace

Of my face,

Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and speech

Each on each.

In one year they sent a million fighters forth

South and North,

And they built their gods a brazen pillar high

As the sky

Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force—

Gold, of course.

O heart! oh blood that freezes, blood that burns!

Earth's returns

For whole centuries of folly, noise and sin!

Shut them in,

With their triumphs and their glories and the rest!

Love is best.

**The Hurt Locker**

BY [BRIAN TURNER](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/brian-turner)

Nothing but hurt left here.

Nothing but bullets and pain

and the bled-out slumping

and all the *fucks* and *goddamns*

and *Jesus Christs* of the wounded.

Nothing left here but the hurt.

Believe it when you see it.

Believe it when a twelve-year-old

rolls a grenade into the room.

Or when a sniper punches a hole

deep into someone’s skull.

Believe it when four men

step from a taxicab in Mosul

to shower the street in brass

and fire. Open the hurt locker

and see what there is of knives

and teeth. Open the hurt locker and learn

how rough men come hunting for souls.

**The Charge of the Light Brigade**

BY [ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/alfred-tennyson)

**I**

Half a league, half a league,

Half a league onward,

All in the valley of Death

   Rode the six hundred.

“Forward, the Light Brigade!

Charge for the guns!” he said.

Into the valley of Death

   Rode the six hundred.

**II**

“Forward, the Light Brigade!”

Was there a man dismayed?

Not though the soldier knew

   Someone had blundered.

   Theirs not to make reply,

   Theirs not to reason why,

   Theirs but to do and die.

   Into the valley of Death

   Rode the six hundred.

**III**

Cannon to right of them,

Cannon to left of them,

Cannon in front of them

   Volleyed and thundered;

Stormed at with shot and shell,

Boldly they rode and well,

Into the jaws of Death,

Into the mouth of hell

   Rode the six hundred.

**IV**

Flashed all their sabres bare,

Flashed as they turned in air

Sabring the gunners there,

Charging an army, while

   All the world wondered.

Plunged in the battery-smoke

Right through the line they broke;

Cossack and Russian

Reeled from the sabre stroke

   Shattered and sundered.

Then they rode back, but not

   Not the six hundred.

**V**

Cannon to right of them,

Cannon to left of them,

Cannon behind them

   Volleyed and thundered;

Stormed at with shot and shell,

While horse and hero fell.

They that had fought so well

Came through the jaws of Death,

Back from the mouth of hell,

All that was left of them,

   Left of six hundred.

**VI**

When can their glory fade?

O the wild charge they made!

   All the world wondered.

Honour the charge they made!

Honour the Light Brigade,

   Noble six hundred!

**O Captain! My Captain!**

BY [WALT WHITMAN](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/walt-whitman)

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,

The ship has weather’d every rack, the prize we sought is won,

The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,

While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;

                         But O heart! heart! heart!

                            O the bleeding drops of red,

                               Where on the deck my Captain lies,

                                  Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;

Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,

For you bouquets and ribbon’d wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,

For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;

                         Here Captain! dear father!

                            This arm beneath your head!

                               It is some dream that on the deck,

                                 You’ve fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,

My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,

The ship is anchor’d safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,

From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;

                         Exult O shores, and ring O bells!

                            But I with mournful tread,

                               Walk the deck my Captain lies,

                                  Fallen cold and dead.

**Dulce et Decorum Est**

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BY [WILFRED OWEN](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/wilfred-owen)

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,

Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,

Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs,

And towards our distant rest began to trudge.

Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,

But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;

Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots

Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling

Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,

But someone still was yelling out and stumbling

And flound’ring like a man in fire or lime.—

Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,

As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams before my helpless sight,

He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace

Behind the wagon that we flung him in,

And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,

His hanging face, like a devil’s sick of sin;

If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood

Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,

Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud

Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—

My friend, you would not tell with such high zest

To children ardent for some desperate glory,

The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est*

*Pro patria mori.*

**For the Fallen**

BY [LAURENCE BINYON](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/laurence-binyon)

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,

England mourns for her dead across the sea.

Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,

Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill; Death august and royal

Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres,

There is music in the midst of desolation

And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,

Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.

They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted;

They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning

We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;

They sit no more at familiar tables of home;

They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;

They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,

Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,

To the innermost heart of their own land they are known

As the stars are known to the Night;

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,

Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain;

As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,

To the end, to the end, they remain.

**ESSAY:**

**Write a 5 paragraph synthesis ESSAY using 2-3 of the given poems.**

Some topic options (you are not limited to these):

* Discuss the impression of war created through literary devices.
* Explore the representation of those in leadership positions.
* Explore how patriotism is represented in the poems
* Explore the “irony” of war being “glorious”

Word count: 750-1000

Include: 3-6 quotes + paraphrasing