**WWI Poetry Packet Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Class\_\_\_\_\_**

**Pre-War**

**1914***Archduke Ferdinand assassinated. Outbreak of war in July/August. Germany invades Belgium. First Battle of the Marne, First Battle of Ypres. United States remains neutral. Trench warfare begins. The Siege of Antwerp. The Christmas truce.*

# **Men Who March Away –**

# BY [THOMAS HARDY](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/thomas-hardy)

What of the faith and fire within us

Men who march away

Ere the barn-cocks say

Night is growing gray,

Leaving all that here can win us;

What of the faith and fire within us

Men who march away?

Is it a purblind prank, O think you,

Friend with the musing eye,

Who watch us stepping by

With doubt and dolorous sigh?

Can much pondering so hoodwink you!

Is it a purblind prank, O think you,

Friend with the musing eye?

Nay. We well see what we are doing,

Though some may not see—

Dalliers as they be—

England's need are we;

Her distress would leave us rueing:

Nay. We well see what we are doing,

Though some may not see!

In our heart of hearts believing

Victory crowns the just,

And that braggarts must

Surely bite the dust,

Press we to the field ungrieving,

In our heart of hearts believing

Victory crowns the just.

Hence the faith and fire within us

Men who march away

Ere the barn-cocks say

Night is growing gray,

Leaving all that here can win us;

Hence the faith and fire within us

Men who march away.

**Joining the Colours**

BY [KATHARINE TYNAN](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/katharine-tynan) (1859 – 1931)

There they go marching all in step so gay!

Smooth-cheeked and golden, food for shells and guns.

Blithely they go as to a wedding day,

The mothers' sons.

The drab street stares to see them row on row

On the high tram-tops, singing like the lark.

Too careless-gay for courage, singing they go

Into the dark.

With tin whistles, mouth-organs, any noise,

They pipe the way to glory and the grave;

Foolish and young, the gay and golden boys

Love cannot save.

High heart! High courage! The poor girls they kissed

Run with them : they shall kiss no more, alas!

Out of the mist they stepped-into the mist

Singing they pass.

Source: *Westminster Gazette* (1914)

**Early War**

**1915 -** *Germans sink RMS*Lusitania*. The Dardenelles campaign. Battle of Gallipoli. Second Battle of Ypres. First use of poison gas*

***In Flanders Fields* (1915)**

BY [JOHN MCCRAE](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/john-mccrae) (1872 - 1918)

In Flanders fields the poppies blow

Between the crosses, row on row,

    That mark our place; and in the sky

    The larks, still bravely singing, fly

Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago

We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,

    Loved and were loved, and now we lie,

        In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:

To you from failing hands we throw

    The torch; be yours to hold it high.

    If ye break faith with us who die

We shall not sleep, though poppies grow

        In Flanders fields.

***Spring in War-Time*  (1915)**BY [SARA TEASDALE](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/sara-teasdale) (1184 – 1933)

I feel the spring far off, far off,

    The faint, far scent of bud and leaf—

Oh, how can spring take heart to come

    To a world in grief,

    Deep grief?

The sun turns north, the days grow long,

    Later the evening star grows bright—

How can the daylight linger on

    For men to fight,

    Still fight?

 The grass is waking in the ground,

    Soon it will rise and blow in waves—

How can it have the heart to sway

    Over the graves,

    New graves?

Under the boughs where lovers walked

    The apple-blooms will shed their breath—

But what of all the lovers now

    Parted by Death, Grey Death?

**Middle War**

**1916 -** *Battle of Verdun, Battle of the Somme. President Wilson re-elected with campaign slogan, “He kept us out of the war.” Rasputin is murdered.*

**1917 -** *Germans issue Zimmerman Telegram to Mexico, United States declares war on Germany, draft begins. U.S. troops land in France. Third Battle of Ypres. Bolshevik uprising in Russia, led by Lenin, headed by Trotsky.*

***The Troop Ship*** (1916)

BY [ISAAC ROSENBERG](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/isaac-rosenberg) (1890 – 1918)

Grotesque and queerly huddled

Contortionists to twist

The sleepy soul to a sleep,

We lie all sorts of ways

And cannot sleep.

The wet wind is so cold,

And the lurching men so careless,

That, should you drop to a doze,

Wind’s fumble or men’s feet

Is on your face.

***Anthem for Doomed Youth*** (1917)

BY [WILFRED OWEN](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/wilfred-owen) (1893 – 1918)

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?

      — Only the monstrous anger of the guns.

      Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle

Can patter out their hasty orisons.

No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;

      Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—

The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;

      And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?

      Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes

Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.

      The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;

Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,

And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

# ***The Death Bed*** (1916)

BY [SIEGFRIED SASSOON](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/siegfried-sassoon) (1886 – 1967)

He drowsed and was aware of silence heaped

Round him, unshaken as the steadfast walls;

Aqueous like floating rays of amber light,

Soaring and quivering in the wings of sleep.

Silence and safety; and his mortal shore

Lipped by the inward, moonless waves of death.

Someone was holding water to his mouth.

He swallowed, unresisting; moaned and dropped

Through crimson gloom to darkness; and forgot

The opiate throb and ache that was his wound.

Water—calm, sliding green above the weir;

Water—a sky-lit alley for his boat,

Bird-voiced, and bordered with reflected flowers

And shaken hues of summer: drifting down,

He dipped contented oars, and sighed, and slept.

Night, with a gust of wind, was in the ward,

Blowing the curtain to a gummering curve.

Night. He was blind; he could not see the stars

Glinting among the wraiths of wandering cloud;

Queer blots of colour, purple, scarlet, green,

Flickered and faded in his drowning eyes.

Rain—he could hear it rustling through the dark;

Fragrance and passionless music woven as one;

Warm rain on drooping roses; pattering showers

That soak the woods; not the harsh rain that sweeps

Behind the thunder, but a trickling peace,

Gently and slowly washing life away.

He stirred, shifting his body; then the pain

Leaped like a prowling beast, and gripped and tore

His groping dreams with grinding claws and fangs.

But someone was beside him; soon he lay

Shuddering because that evil thing had passed.

And death, who'd stepped toward him, paused and stared.

Light many lamps and gather round his bed.

Lend him your eyes, warm blood, and will to live.

Speak to him; rouse him; you may save him yet.

He's young; he hated war; how should he die

When cruel old campaigners win safe through?

But death replied: “I choose him.” So he went,

And there was silence in the summer night;

Silence and safety; and the veils of sleep.

Then, far away, the thudding of the guns.

Source: *The Old Huntsman and Other Poems* (1917)

# ***A Child's Nightmare* (1917)**

By Robert Graves

Through long nursery nights he stood

By my bed unwearying,

Loomed gigantic, formless, queer,

Purring in my haunted ear

That same hideous nightmare thing,

Talking, as he lapped my blood,

In a voice cruel and flat,

Saying for ever, "Cat! ... Cat! ... Cat!..."

That one word was all he said,

That one word through all my sleep,

In monotonous mock despair.

Nonsense may be light as air,

But there's Nonsense that can keep

Horror bristling round the head,

When a voice cruel and flat

Says for ever, "Cat! ... Cat! ... Cat!..."

He had faded, he was gone

Years ago with Nursery Land,

When he leapt on me again

From the clank of a night train,

Overpowered me foot and head,

Lapped my blood, while on and on

The old voice cruel and flat

Says for ever, "Cat! ... Cat! ... Cat!..."

Morphia drowsed, again I lay

In a crater by High Wood:

He was there with straddling legs,

Staring eyes as big as eggs,

Purring as he lapped my blood,

His black bulk darkening the day,

With a voice cruel and flat,

"Cat! ... Cat! ... Cat! ... Cat!..." he said, "Cat! ... Cat!..."

When I'm shot through heart and head,

And there's no choice but to die,

The last word I'll hear, no doubt,

Won't be "Charge!" or "Bomb them out!"

Nor the stretcher-bearer's cry,

"Let that body be, he's dead!"

But a voice cruel and flat

Saying for ever, "Cat! ... Cat! ... Cat!"

**End War**

**1918 -** *U.S. President Wilson issues Fourteen Points to peace. Germany launches Spring Offensive, bombs Paris. United States launches attacks at Belleau Wood and Argonne Forest. Bolsheviks murder Tsar Nicholas II and Romanov family. Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicates, Germany signs armistice on November 11. Paris Peace Conference.*

***Smile, Smile, Smile*** (1918)

BY [WILFRED OWEN](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/wilfred-owen) (1893 - 1918)

Head to limp head, the sunk-eyed wounded scanned

Yesterday's *Mail*; the casualties (typed small)

And (large) Vast Booty from our Latest Haul.

Also, they read of Cheap Homes, not yet planned;

“For,” said the paper, “when this war is done

The men's first instinct will be making homes.

Meanwhile their foremost need is aerodromes,

It being certain war has just begun.

Peace would do wrong to our undying dead,—

The sons we offered might regret they died

If we got nothing lasting in their stead.

We must be solidly indemnified.

Though all be worthy Victory which all bought.

We rulers sitting in this ancient spot

Would wrong our very selves if we forgot

The greatest glory will be theirs who fought,

Who kept this nation in integrity.”

Nation?—The half-limbed readers did not chafe

But smiled at one another curiously

Like secret men who know their secret safe.

(This is the thing they know and never speak,

That England one by one had fled to France

Not many elsewhere now save under France).

Pictures of these broad smiles appear each week,

And people in whose voice real feeling rings

Say: How they smile! They're happy now, poor things.

Source: *Poems* (1920)

**1919 and After -** *Armies demobilize, return home. Peace Treaty of Versailles ratified by Germany; U.S. Senate votes to reject treaty and refuses to join League of Nations. Proposal and constitution for League of Nations. The Cenotaph unveiled in London. Treaty of Sevres in 1920 ends war on Eastern Front.*

***Everyone Sang*** (1919)

BY [SIEGFRIED SASSOON](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/siegfried-sassoon) (1886 - 1967)

Everyone suddenly burst out singing;

And I was filled with such delight

As prisoned birds must find in freedom,

Winging wildly across the white

Orchards and dark-green fields; on - on - and out of sight.

Everyone's voice was suddenly lifted;

And beauty came like the setting sun:

My heart was shaken with tears; and horror

Drifted away ... O, but Everyone

Was a bird; and the song was wordless; the singing will never be done

**Epitaphs: Common Form**

***By Rudyard Kipling***

If any question why we died,

Tell them, because our fathers lied.