

Kenneth slessor - beach burial

[Life](#), [Death](#)



Kenneth Slessor - Beach Burial The title of the poem, 'Beach Burial', has an ironic slant, as beaches are commonly associated with life and pleasure. Instead, the poem consists of the opposite: death and sorrow. Similarly, the poem first two stanzas include low, soft sounds, such as "softly", "humbly", "convoys" and "rolls", with the rhythm and alliteration of "swaying and wandering", which present a calm, soothing tone. However, this soothing calm is more of a grief, as illustrated by the onomatopoeia, in "sobbing and clubbing of the gunfire". The main place or action is sensed as afar, so the washing up of "dead sailors and tide wood" represents a calm after a storm, wherein the storm is a battle out to sea. The suffering of the sailors is emphasised by the symbolic "cross" in the third stanza, and their vulnerability is expressed by their "nakedness". In their suffering, the sailors lose their individual identities, so are uniformly "unknown seamen". In this conformity, the sailors are united by death - as represented by the sand - despite their former enemy statuses. This unity of opposite sides "enlisted on the other front" bodily quashes the idea of war, and instead promotes peace, which is partly but ironically achieved in the poem's tone. This profound idea consists of the nations fighting on a common front against common problems in humanity, such as war, disease, environmental disasters, and poverty. The entirety of the poem honours the tragic death of the sailors at war. There is a single figure noted who literally honours the deaths, and is consequently applauded for "his time" taken out of a busy schedule in a modern society. But, if this man was not to exist, or this poem not to be read, the sailors would remain devoid of appreciation and mourning, instead floating among nature as a cruel waste of life.