

# The oxford book of war poetry

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The oxford book of war poetry in my view is an anthology that grabs the heart of the reader and puts them in the same standpoint as the poets themselves. The subject of war grabs the attention of everyone. At the time of the war Great Britain was divided, there were the people that talked of war and there are the people that were stuck in the cruel, harsh reality of war, and I feel that not all the poets have written their poems with a direct link to horror. The oxford book of war poetry comprises of many poems, most of which highlights enormous amounts of emotion the poets had wrote with.

Not all of the poets have written with the same type of emotion. The anthology highlights the vivid descriptions and explanations of war and each poet has written their own point of view, although some slightly different.

War is an inhumane, shocking and terrifying act which can only be associated with horror. I feel that, poetry, to work must be created with emotion; all soldiers that fight in war have overwhelming amounts of emotion. Savageness, cruelty, love, pity are some that come with fighting on the battlefield.

Wilfred Owen is quoted (in his preface) ‘above all this book is not concerned with poetry, the subject of it is war, and the pity of war, the poetry is in the pity’, therefore illustrating the sympathy and sadness caused by soldiers suffering. Owen documents human suffering both physical and mental. ‘Bent double, like old buggers under sacks, knock knee, coughing like hags’ in the poem ‘Dulce Et Decorum Est’ emphasises the fatigue of the soldiers. Owen also highlights in his poem, the insensibility a soldier needs to be happy at war, highlighted by ‘happy are the men who yet before they are killed can let their veins run cold’ on the first line of ‘insensibility’.

He also stresses how the poets of war should be truthful in their writing ‘ All the poet can do is warn, that is why the true poets must be truthful. ‘ In ‘ the oxford book of war poetry’ death is a prominent feature (with war comes death), poets like Edward Thomas use the imagery of nature as a catalyst. Edward questions the morality of himself and the soldiers. He utilises flowers growing at Easter time to illustrate the solidarity as ‘ Eastertide’ with family came into the ‘ mind’ of the men. ‘ Now far from home, who, with their sweethearts, Should have gathered them and will do never again’.

Using ‘ never again’ he highlights the forthcoming deaths of the soldiers. Although Edwards is less abrupt in his writing manner, he still illustrates the horrors of war. Charles Sorley wrote his poetry with less sentimental values, ‘ when you see millions of mouthless dead’ illustrates how the dead were seen on the battle field; he wrote his poems with bluntness and dissociates the living and the dead. For deaf, how should they know’ is a power reminder of how the dead cannot hear their loved ones mourning. In utilising language such as ‘ Mouthless’ on the first line, he highlights the way in which the dead are unable to communicate with the living.

In ‘ The Soldier,’ reflecting upon his possible death on the first line ‘ If I should die’ Rupert Brooke imagines the place in which he falls to be ‘ forever England’. He shows patriotism and a desire to fight for his country. In ‘ Peace’ he questions the ‘ the sick heart, that honour could not move’ and illustrates the sense of honour and duty soldiers hold when fighting in war. He also found justification from god who ‘ matched’ the men ‘ with his hour’. ‘ The Soldier’ was written some time before the war started, this is why I feel

that this poem had a greater sense of patriotism. His opinion of war was different to some of the other poets in the Anthology.

He shows his emotion in the love for his country. He felt that dying for his country would 'shed all evil away', which is an illustration of the amount of feelings he had towards England and the willingness he has to die for 'her' cause. Using 'her' he compares his love, to a love that a man would have for a woman. Brooke has also written the poem in the form of a sonnet, which are traditionally used in romantic poems.

The poets in 'The Oxford Book of War Poetry' emphasise their experiences, emotions and their opinions of war. Some have intentionally written about the horrors of war, to warn readers of its horrors. But others have written romantically, patriotically used images of nature to tell a story and writing about of a war, these poets could not have hidden the horror of war.