

## POEMS

### Exposure – Wilfred Owen

An authentic poem based on Owen's own experience on the front line. It was a horrendous winter and the men are subject not to enemy attacks but to the brutality of nature. Nature is personified as the main enemy and the men can only wait to die. It is an anti-war poem and stresses the insignificance of man compared to nature.

### Bayonet Charge – Ted Hughes

The poem focuses on a single soldier's experience of a charge towards enemy lines. It describes his thoughts and actions as he tries to stay alive. It is clear that the soldier is not ready for the charge and could have been sleeping. The soldier fears for his life and the patriotic ideals that encouraged him to fight have gone.

### Poppies – Jane Weir

A mother describes her son leaving home, seemingly to join the army. The poem is about the mother's emotional reaction losing her son to the war. She fears for his safety and after he leaves her she goes to a familiar place that reminds her of him.

### War Photographer – Carol Ann Duffy

A war photographer is in his darkroom, developing pictures that he has taken in different war zones. As the pictures develop he recalls the death of one man and remembers the cries of his wife. The photographer contrasts his experiences to rural England and focuses on people who do not seem to care about war-torn places.

### Storm on the Island – Seamus Heaney

The narrator describes how a community are waiting to be hit by a storm. It is obvious that they have been hit before because of the landscape of the island (houses squat). The narrator starts off confident but as the storm hits the power of the storm creates feelings of fear and trepidation. The poem also serves somewhat as a metaphor for the troubles in Northern Ireland.

## Power and Conflict Poetry (War) Knowledge Organiser

### Key Themes:

- Realism
- Collective voice
- Inner conflict
- Violence
- Natural world
- Morality
- Plight of the working classes
- Free will

### Glossary

**poignant** – evoking a keen sense of sadness or regret

**salvo** – a sudden heavy attack from heavy weaponry

**khaki** – A strong dull brownish-yellow material used in military uniforms

**bewilderment** – a feeling of confusion

**Armistice Sunday** – A day in November commemorating the end of WW1

**Mass** – Catholic ceremony commemorating Christ's last supper

**Mary Seacole** – A Jamaican national heroine who fought against slavery.

**'Belfast, Beirut, Phnom Penh.'** – A list of past war zones from the 20<sup>th</sup> century

**Sunday's supplement** – Additional material, often in the form of a small magazine, found within a Sunday newspaper. Usually contains lots of pictures and about topical issues/interests.

### Key Vocabulary

Trauma, nationalism, patriotism, propaganda, ideology, occupation, loyalty, futility, devastation, terror, colloquial, PTSD, floriography, ambiguity, contemporary, monotony, nonchalance, domestic, sacrifice, loss, freedom, terror

## Structure

### Exposure –

Contrast of Cold>Warm>Cold imagery conveys Suffering>Delusions>Death of the hypothermic soldier.  
Repetition of “**but nothing happens**” creates circular structure implying never ending suffering  
Rhyme scheme ABBA and hexameter gives the poem structure and emphasises the monotony.

### Bayonet Charge –

The poem starts 'in medias res': in the middle of the action, to convey shock and pace.  
Enjambment maintains the momentum of the charge.  
Time stands still in the second stanza to convey the soldier's bewilderment and reflective thoughts.

### Poppies –

This is an **Elegy**, a poem of mourning.  
Strong sense of form despite the **free verse**, stream of consciousness addressing her son directly poignant  
No rhyme scheme makes it melancholic  
Enjambment gives it an anecdotal tone.  
Nearly half the lines have caesura – she is trying to hold it together, but can't speak fluently as she is breaking inside.

### War Photographer –

Rhyme reinforces the idea that he is trying to bring order to a chaotic world – to create an understanding.  
Contrasts: imagery of rural England and nightmare war zones.

### Storm on the Island –

Written in blank verse and with lots of enjambment: this creates a conversational and anecdotal tone.  
'We' (first person plural) creates a sense of community, and 'You' (direct address) makes the reader feel immersed in the experience.

## Language

**Exposure** – Uses personification to make the weather seem just as deadly an enemy as the German soldiers. Repetition of pronouns to show collective suffering.

**Bayonet Charge** – Use of simile and metaphor to show the soldier's extreme emotions, as well as, caesura (full stop) to soldier's jolt back to reality.

**Poppies** – Use of contrasting semantic fields of home/childhood with war/injury to emphasise the sense of loss experienced by the mother.

**War Photographer** – Biblical references demonstrate how temporary human life is; emotive language emphasises lasting impact on the war photographer. Use of pronoun 'they' creates a sense of ambiguity.

**Storm on the Island** – Violent verbs used to describe the storm; semantic field of war used to describe storm and serve as metaphors for Northern Ireland Troubles