**COMMENT TO THE SOLDIER**

**COMPREHENSION**

1. The poet is speaking and he is also a soldier

2. No, he isn't afraid of death

3. If he dies in war, his grave will be in a foreign field because the first world war was not fought in England, but in continental Europe.

4. It will become a richer dust than the soil around it because it will contain the body of a soldier who died for his country and who has become a hero

5. War is an abstract idea, the emphasis is on the poet's feelings

6. He is speaking to the English people

**ANALYSIS**

3.

It's a **Petrarchan sonnet** (formed by 14 lines divided into 2 quatrains and 2 triplets, while the Shakespearean sonnet was formed by 3 quatrains and a final couplet). It’s a very traditional form of poetry and also the content is very traditional

4.

The images speak about a richer dust (line 4) and eternity (a pulse in the eternal mind, line 10); they suggest immortality, glory and peace which are positive concepts

5/6.

The poet uses a **personification** when he compares England to a mother who gave him life (bore, line 5) and taught him to be a good person and a brave soldier (line 5). The poet also underlines the beauty of the **English landscape** (flowers, l. 6, rivers and sun, l. 8) and the joy, friendliness and gentleness of the **English people** (l. 12-14)

England and English are repeated 6 times to underline the poet's love for his country

7.

The **tone** is patriotic and sentimental. It gives a positive and idealized representation of the war that offers to a soldier the opportunity to prove his patriotism and courage and to become immortal. In fact, death in battle is not seen as a tragic experience, but it is a noble act that will make the soldier immortal because his heroism will remain and he will be remembered even after his death.

**COMMENT TO DULCE ET DECORUM EST**

EX. 2

1. In the first stanza the soldiers are retreating from the front line trench to the trenches behind where they could rest. The poet uses the pronoun “we” because he is one of these soldiers
2. In the second stanza the gas comes, the soldiers must wear the masks as quickly as possible, but one soldier can’t wear the mask in time and so he dies in front of the others who can’t help him. They can only see him while he is dying. The poet uses the pronoun “I” to say that he will see this scene for ever in his nightmares
3. In the third stanza the poet describes the dead soldier using horrible images and then he speaks to a reader. This reader is someone who has a positive and idealized idea of the war, who still believes in the “old lie” that gives the title to the poem, that is “It is sweet and honorable to die for your country”. He says that if this reader could see these scenes, he would understand the reality of the war and he would stop believing in this lie

EX. 4

Owen uses many **alliterations** (for ex. “b” in line 1, “kn” in line 2 and “d” in line 7; he also uses **onomatoepias** in line 16 (“choking” that reproduces the noise made by the soldier who is dying) and in line 22 (“gurgling” that reproduces the sound of the blood which comes out of the dead body).

EX. 6

In the first stanza, the **verbs** suggest that the soldiers move slowly and badly.

In the second stanza the **verbs** suggest panic and terror because of the gas.

Ex. 7

In the first stanza, Owen uses **metaphors** and **similes** to compare the soldiers to old people (l.1) and hags (l. 2) and to say that they are very tired and sick (l. 7). This imagery is connected with disease, suffering and physical and moral exhaustion.

In the second and third stanza, the **similes** refer to a strange and supernatural world (l. 12 “man on fire”, l. 14 “green sea”, l. 20: the dead soldier is compared to a devil). This world is horrible because Owen wants to compare the war to a nightmare or even to hell.

Ex. 8

This “**lie**” is defined “**old**” because it has been used many times to hide the reality of the war. Owen blames the politicians and the government that use this old lie for propaganda, to convince the people to join the army. He uses it ironically, because actually he proves that it isn’t sweet or honorable to die in war.

Ex. 9

The poem is clearly against the war, the poet wants to warn the readers and to show the reality of the war. He uses anti-heroic images to do that.

**COMPARISON BROOKE VS OWEN**

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **BROOKE** | **OWEN** |
| Tone | Sentimental, patriotic, idealized | Realistic, disenchanted, full of pity for the soldiers, the poet condemns the war |
| Imagery | Positive, linked to nature, joy, good feelings | Negative, linked to disease, suffering, nightmares, hell |
| Message | Death in war gives glory | Death in war is useless, patriotism and heroism are a lie |