**Grass**

By Carl Sandburg (1878-1967)

Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo,

Shovel them under and let me work--

I am the grass; I cover all.

And pile them high at Gettysburg

And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.

Shovel them under and let me work.

Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:

What place is this?

Where are we now?

I am the grass.

Let me work.

**Dulce et Decorum Est**

**By Wilfred Owen**

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,

Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,

Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs

And towards our distant rest began to trudge.

Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots

But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;

Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots

Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind.

Gas! Gas! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling,

Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;

But someone still was yelling out and stumbling

And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime...

Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,

As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,

He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace

Behind the wagon that we flung him in,

And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,

His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;

If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood

Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,

Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud

Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—

My friend, you would not tell with such high zest

To children ardent for some desperate glory,

The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est*

*Pro patria mori*.

**Daddy**

**by** [**Sylvia Plath**](http://www.internal.org/Sylvia_Plath)

You do not do, you do not do

Any more, black shoe

In which I have lived like a foot

For thirty years, poor and white,

Barely daring to breathe or Achoo.

Daddy, I have had to kill you.

You died before I had time--

Marble-heavy, a bag full of God,

Ghastly statue with one gray toe

Big as a Frisco seal

And a head in the freakish Atlantic

Where it pours bean green over blue

In the waters off beautiful Nauset.

I used to pray to recover you.

Ach, du.

In the German tongue, in the Polish town

Scraped flat by the roller

Of wars, wars, wars.

But the name of the town is common.

My Polack friend

Says there are a dozen or two.

So I never could tell where you

Put your foot, your root,

I never could talk to you.

The tongue stuck in my jaw.

It stuck in a barb wire snare.

Ich, ich, ich, ich,

I could hardly speak.

I thought every German was you.

And the language obscene

An engine, an engine

Chuffing me off like a Jew.

A Jew to Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen.

I began to talk like a Jew.

I think I may well be a Jew.

The snows of the Tyrol, the clear beer of Vienna

Are not very pure or true.

With my gipsy ancestress and my weird luck

And my Taroc pack and my Taroc pack

I may be a bit of a Jew.

I have always been scared of you,

With your Luftwaffe, your gobbledygoo.

And your neat mustache

And your Aryan eye, bright blue.

Panzer-man, panzer-man, O You--

Not God but a swastika

So black no sky could squeak through.

Every woman adores a Fascist,

The boot in the face, the brute

Brute heart of a brute like you.

You stand at the blackboard, daddy,

In the picture I have of you,

A cleft in your chin instead of your foot

But no less a devil for that, no not

Any less the black man who

Bit my pretty red heart in two.

I was ten when they buried you.

At twenty I tried to die

And get back, back, back to you.

I thought even the bones would do.

But they pulled me out of the sack,

And they stuck me together with glue.

And then I knew what to do.

I made a model of you,

A man in black with a Meinkampf look

And a love of the rack and the screw.

And I said I do, I do.

So daddy, I'm finally through.

The black telephone's off at the root,

The voices just can't worm through.

If I've killed one man, I've killed two--

The vampire who said he was you

And drank my blood for a year,

Seven years, if you want to know.

Daddy, you can lie back now.

There's a stake in your fat black heart

And the villagers never liked you.

They are dancing and stamping on you.

They always knew it was you.

Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through.

**Childhood Is the Kingdom Where Nobody Dies**  
by Edna St. Vincent Millay

Childhood is not from birth to a certain age and at a certain age

The child is grown, and puts away childish things.

Childhood is the kingdom where nobody dies.

Nobody that matters, that is. Distant relatives of course

Die, whom one never has seen or has seen for an hour,

And they gave one candy in a pink-and-green stripèd bag, or a jack-knife,

And went away, and cannot really be said to have lived at all.

And cats die. They lie on the floor and lash their tails,

And their reticent fur is suddenly all in motion

With fleas that one never knew were there,

Polished and brown, knowing all there is to know,

Trekking off into the living world.

You fetch a shoe-box, but it's much too small, because she won't curl up now:

So you find a bigger box, and bury her in the yard, and weep.

But you do not wake up a month from then, two months,

A year from then, two years, in the middle of the night

And weep, with your knuckles in your mouth, and say Oh, God! Oh, God!

Childhood is the kingdom where nobody dies that matters, – mothers and fathers don't die.

And if you have said, "For heaven's sake, must you always be kissing a person?"

Or, "I do wish to gracious you'd stop tapping on the window with your thimble!"

Tomorrow, or even the day after tomorrow if you're busy having\_fun,

Is plenty of time to say, "I'm sorry, mother."

To be grown up is to sit at the table with people who have died, who neither listen nor speak;

Who do not drink their tea, though they always said

Tea was such a comfort.

Run down into the cellar and bring up the last jar of raspberries; they are not tempted.

Flatter them, ask them what was it they said exactly

That time, to the bishop, or to the overseer, or to Mrs. Mason;

They are not taken in.

Shout at them, get red in the face, rise,

Drag them up out of their chairs by their stiff shoulders and shake them and yell at them;

They are not startled, they are not even embarrassed; they slide back into their chairs.

Your tea is cold now.

You drink it standing up,

And leave the house.

**pity this busy monster,manunkind**

**By e.e. cummings**

pity this busy monster,manunkind,

not. Progress is a comfortable disease:

your victum(death and life safely beyond)

plays with the bigness of his littleness

-electrons deify one razorblade

into a mountainrange;lenses extend

unwish through curving wherewhen until unwish

returns on its unself.

A world of made

is not a world of born-pity poor flesh

and trees,poor stars and stones,but never this

fine specimen of hypermagical

ultraomnipotence. We doctors know

a hopeless case if-listen:there's a hell

of a good universe next door;let's go

**- e. e. cummings**