

Suicide in Trenches (Siegfried Sassoon)

I knew a simple soldier boy
Who grinned at life in empty joy,
Slept soundly through the lonesome dark,
And whistled early with the lark.

In winter trenches, cowed and glum
With crumps and lice and lack of rum,
He put a bullet through his brain.
No one spoke of him again.

You smug-faced crowds with kindling eye
Who cheer when soldier lads march by,
Sneak home and pray you'll never know
The hell where youth and laughter go.

The General (Siegfried Sassoon)

“Good-Morning; good–morning!” the General said
When we met him last week on our way to the Line,
Now the soldiers he smiled at are most of ‘em dead,
And we’re cursing his staff for incompetent swine.
“He’s a cheery old card,” grunted Harry to Jack
As they slogged up to Arras with rifle and pack.

But he did for them both by his plan of attack.

Survivors (Siegfried Sassoon)

No doubt they’ll soon get well; the shock and strain
Have caused their stammering, disconnected talk.
Of course they’re “longing to go out again,” –
These boys with old, scared faces, learning to walk,
They’ll soon forget their haunted nights; their cowed
Subjection to the ghosts of friends who died, -
Their dreams that drip with murder; and they’ll be proud
Of glorious war that shatter’d all their pride...
Men who went out to battle, grim and glad;
Children, with eyes that hate you, broken and mad.

Does It Matter? (Siegfried Sassoon)

Does it matter? – losing your legs?...
For people will always be kind,
And you need not show that you mind
When the others come in after football
To gobble their muffins and eggs.

Does it matter? – losing your sight?...
There's such splendid work for the blind;
And people will always be kind,
As you sit on the terrace remembering
And turning your face to the light.

Do they matter? – those dreams from the pit?...
You can drink and forget and be glad,
And people won't say that you're mad;
For they'll know that you've fought for your country,
And no one will worry a bit.