**DULCE ET DECORUM EST(1)**

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,

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

Till on the haunting flares(2) we turned our backs

And towards our distant rest(3) 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(4)

Of tired, outstripped(5) Five-Nines(6) that dropped behind.

Gas!(7) Gas! Quick, boys! – An ecstasy of fumbling,

Fitting the clumsy helmets(8) just in time;

But someone still was yelling out and stumbling,

And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime(9) . . .

Dim, through the misty panes(10) 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,(11) 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(12)

Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,

My friend, you would not tell with such high zest(13)

To children ardent(14) for some desperate glory,

The old Lie; Dulce et Decorum est

Pro patria mori.(15)

Wilfred Owen

Thought to have been written between 8 October 1917 and March, 1918

### Notes on Dulce et Decorum Est

1. DULCE ET DECORUM EST - the first words of a Latin saying (taken from an ode by Horace). The words were widely understood and often quoted at the start of the First World War. They mean "It is sweet and right." The full saying ends the poem: Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori - it is sweet and right to die for your country. In other words, it is a wonderful and great honour to fight and die for your country