**Anthem for Doomed Youth**

BY [WILFRED OWEN](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/wilfred-owen), 1917

**What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?**

**— Only the monstrous anger of the guns.**

**Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle**

**Can patter out their hasty orisons.**

**No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;**

**Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—**

**The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;**

**And bugles calling for them from sad shires.**

**What candles may be held to speed them all?**

**Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes**

**Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.**

**The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;**

**Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,**

**And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.**

Source: The Poems of Wilfred Owen, edited by Jon Stallworthy (W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1986)

Note: Wilfred Edward Salter Owen [MC](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_Cross) (18 March 1893 – 4 November 1918) was an English poet and soldier, one of the leading poets of the [First World War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I). His shocking, realistic war poetry on the horrors of [trenches](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trench_warfare) and [gas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poison_gas_in_World_War_I) warfare was heavily influenced by his friend and mentor [Siegfried Sassoon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siegfried_Sassoon), and stood in stark contrast both to the public perception of war at the time and to the confidently patriotic verse written by earlier war poets. Owen was [killed in action](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Killed_in_action) on 4 November 1918 during the crossing of the [Sambre–Oise Canal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sambre%E2%80%93Oise_Canal%22%20%5Co%20%22Sambre%E2%80%93Oise%20Canal), exactly one week (almost to the hour) before the signing of the [Armistice](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armistice_with_Germany_%28Compi%C3%A8gne%29) …. His mother received the telegram informing her of his death on [Armistice Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armistice_Day), as the church bells were ringing out in celebration. (Source: Wikipedia)