



The Soldier

Rupert Brooke

1914 and Other Poems (1915)

This poem is noted for its lyricism which, together with his handsome appearance and premature death, made Brooke a favourite poet among the young people of his generation.



1.4

If I should die, think only this of me:
 That there's some corner of a foreign field
 That is for ever England. There shall be
 In that rich earth a richer dust¹ concealed²;
 5 A dust whom England bore³, shaped, made aware,
 Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam⁴,
 A body of England's, breathing⁵ English air,
 Washed by the rivers, blest⁶ by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away⁷,
 10 A pulse⁸ in the eternal mind⁹, no less
 Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
 Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
 And laughter, learnt of¹⁰ friends; and gentleness,
 In hearts at peace, under an English heaven¹¹.

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 dust. Polvere. | 6 blest. Benedetto. |
| 2 concealed. Nascosta. | 7 shed away. Liberatosi da. |
| 3 bore. Generò. | 8 pulse. Battito. |
| 4 to roam. Da esplorare, da percorrere. | 9 mind. Spirito. |
| 5 breathing. Che respira. | 10 learnt of. Learnt from. |
| | 11 heaven. Cielo. |

WARM-UP

- FOCUS** on the title of Rupert Brooke's poem. What traits do you think a good soldier should possess?

COMPREHENSION

- READ** the poem and say:
 - who is speaking;
 - if he is afraid of death;
 - where his grave will be;
 - how his dead body will enrich the soil;
 - whether there is any emphasis on war;
 - who you think the poet is speaking to.



ANALYSIS

- WORK OUT** the rhyme scheme and say what kind of poem this is.
- FIND** the images referring to death. What idea do they suggest?
- LIST** the images connected with England under the following headings:
 - Landscape
 - Inner growth and private feelings
- HIGHLIGHT** the view of England conveyed. What traditional qualities does the poet underline?
- DEFINE** the tone of the poem and summarise its theme.



1 Troops moving up to the Front. Imperial War Museum, London.