

Response Paper #8

Composition II

After RE-reading through the *Explication Assignment Packet* found either on the class website or Google Classroom, select ONE of the two options for outlining an Explication Essay. Re-read the poem below, and using the outline of your choosing, attempt to write a practice explication essay. Please follow the direction(s) from the packet.

[Friends, I know you have already answered questions over this poem (and thus you are already familiar with it). If you recall, I mentioned that some people have argued this is an anti-war poem and some people argue that it is not anti-war (but a poem arguing against the over glamorization war). I even had you take a side on this question in Quiz #17. With your original answer in mind, I would like for you to write a formal explication essay defending your claim. Therefore, your thesis/topic in your Introduction is the brief answer to the question: Is this an anti-war poem? Your explication over will the poem will prove your position.]

A Final Word: **Once again, I know you have never done anything like this before; however, I want you to give it a try. As noted before, I will extend MUCH grace here. Your job is to do your best and forget the rest. I am also very aware that there are several online examples of explications/analysis over this poem. It is very well-known. So please do your own work for this assignment. Neglect the temptation to seek “help” online. If not, Turnitin will catch it, and you will receive no credit. Trust me, neither you nor I want this to happen.**

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 gas-shells dropping softly 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.

Notes:

- 1. Latin phrase is from the Roman poet Horace: “It is sweet and fitting to die for one’s country.”**
- 2. By the way, Wilfred Owen died as a soldier in the war.**