

Words and images from World War One

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Department of Public Health Seminar, University of Otago,
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*Never such
innocence
Never before or
since*

Philip Larkin, *MCMXIV*

11 April 2014
Department of Public Health seminar
University of Otago, Wellington



C. R. W. Nevinson, *Paths of Glory* 1917

‘I could see out over an area of ten square kilometres The men were all so tiny and lost in it that I could hardly see them.

A shell fell in the midst of these little things, which moved for a moment, carrying off the wounded - the dead, as unimportant as so many ants, were left behind.’



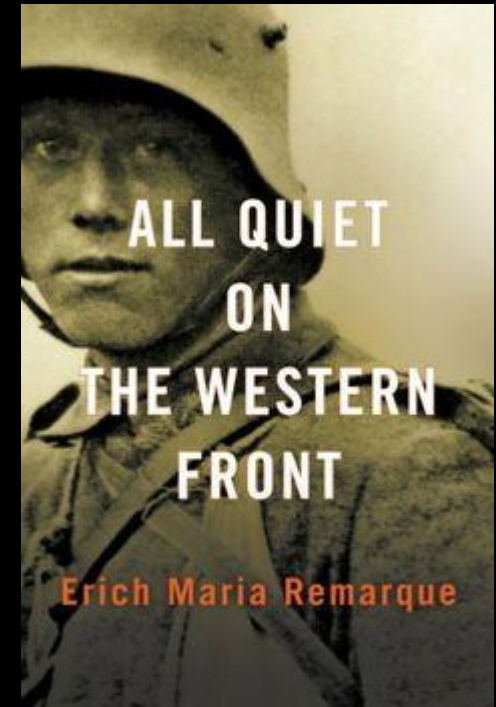
Fernand Léger, Verdun



Georges Leroux, *Hell*

We are unfeeling
dead who, through
some dangerous trick
of magic, are still
able to run and kill.

Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on
the Western Front*

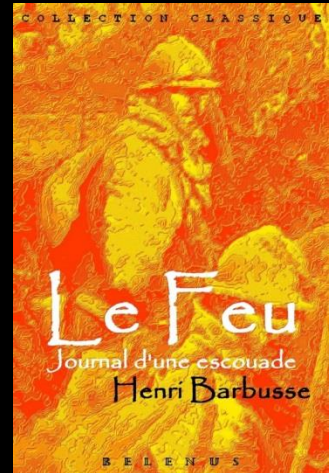




C. R. W. Nevinson, *The Harvest of Battle*

‘Here, among the massacred trees which in the fog surrounded us in a ghostly scene, everything was shapeless, there was not a piece of wall even, not a fence or gate still standing’

Henri Barbusse, *Le Feu*



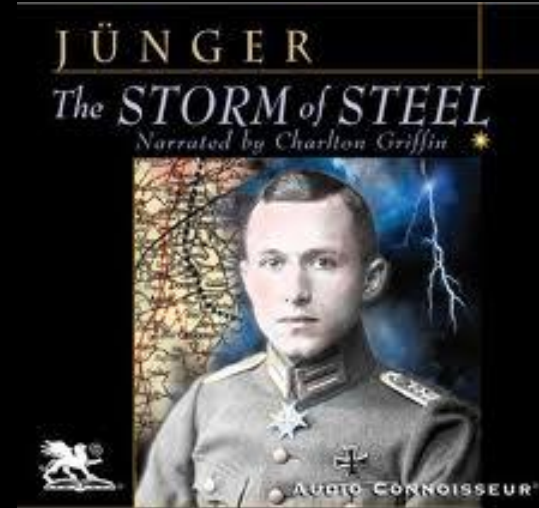


Paul Nash, *Void*

‘From time to time one of us disappeared up to their waist in the mud, and if our comrades had not come to their rescue, holding out their rifle butt, they would certainly have gone under. ...

Traces of blood on the surface of some heavy shell-holes told us that several men had already been swallowed up.’

Ernst Jünger, *Storms of Steel*





Henry Tonks,
Saline infusion

Do you remember the stretcher-
cases lurching back

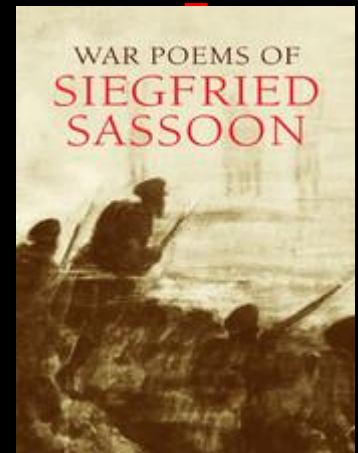
With dying eyes and lolling
heads-those ashen-grey

Masks of the lads who once
were keen and kind and gay?

Have you forgotten yet?...

Look up, and swear by the
green of the spring that you'll
never forget.

Siegfried Sassoon, *Aftermath*



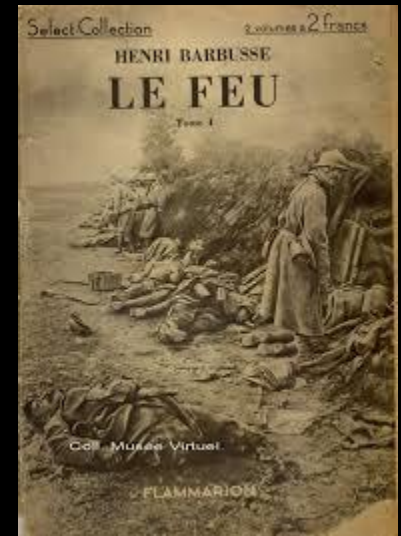


Henry Tonks, *An Advanced Dressing Station in France, 1918*

In the horizontal abyss,
extending stretcher after
stretcher, gradually getting
smaller as far as the eye
could see, out towards the
pale opening of daylight,

the bric-a-brac of limbs
and heads moving,
cries and moans waking
one another and spreading
like invisible ghosts.

Henri Barbusse, *Le Feu*





Ugo Matania, *Verdun hospital*

A whole night long
crouched close
to one of our men
butchered
with his clenched
mouth
grinning at the full moon

Giuseppe Ungaretti, *Vigil*

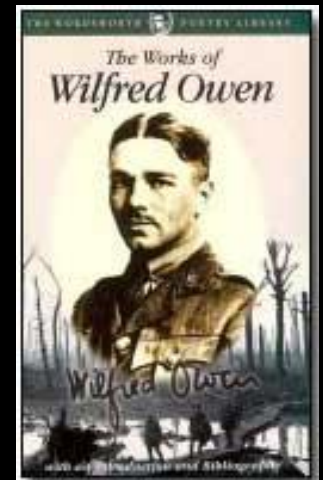




Bill Lewis, *World War One*

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

Wilfred Owen *Dulce et decorum est*



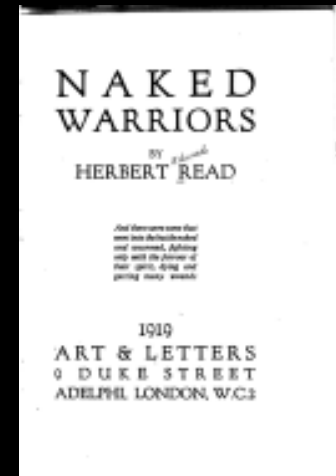


Otto Dix, *Transplantation*, 1924

Bloody saliva
Dribbles down his
shapeless jacket.

I saw him stab
And stab again
A well-killed B.

This is the happy warrior,
This is he...



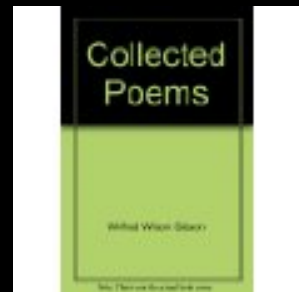
Herbert Read, *The Happy Warrior*



Adolf Erbslöh, *Destroyed Forest near Verdun*, 1916

Who know it wasn't I,
But someone just like me,
Who went across the sea
And with my head and hands
Killed men in foreign lands...
Though I must bear the blame,
Because he bore my name

Wilfred Gibson, *Back*

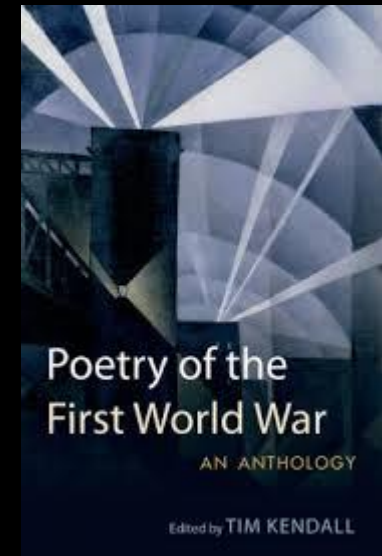




Austin Osman Spare, *Operating in a Regimental Aid Post*, 1918

Neck-deep in mud,
He mowed and raved -
He who had braved
The field of blood

Wilfred Gibson, *Mad* (1914)

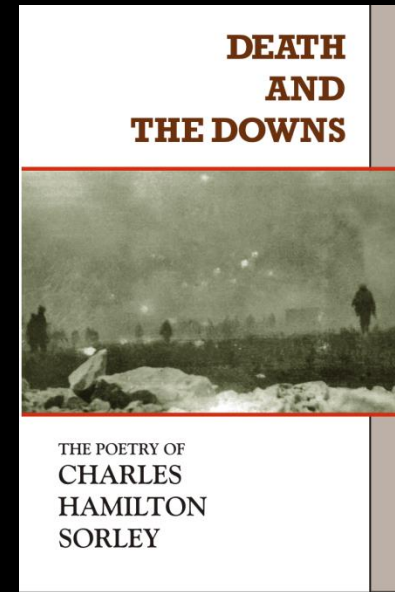




Georges Paul Leroux, *Soldats enterrant leurs camarades au clair de lune*, 1915

When you see millions of the
mouthless dead
Across your dreams in pale
battalions go,
Say not soft things as other
men have said,
That you'll remember. For you
need not so.
Give them not praise. For deaf,
how should they know

Charles Hamilton Sorley, 1915





Gassed soldiers