

"Strange Meeting"

classmate

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- Wilfred Owen

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"Above all, I am not concerned with poetry
My subject is war, and the pity of war
The poetry is in the pity"

The fragmentary preface of Wilfred Owen to his war poems speaks volumes of his philosophy of war. "Strange Meeting" is definitely one of the most powerful statements of Owen about the meaninglessness, the waste, the futility, the horror and the pity of war. Unlike the patriotic poets like Robert Brooke and others who glorify and glamorize war, Owen lays bare the naked reality of it.

The poem recounts the experiences of a soldier just killed meeting his enemy he killed the day before. The horrible, the nightmarish experiences are conveyed through the dialogue of the dead men who meet in after life in an under world. The sense of colossal waste and the meaning of pity are also expressed through the dialogue.

The first few lines bring to us the vivid memory of warfare. The scene of the battlefield from where the speaker seemed

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to have escaped —

"Down some profound dull tunnel, —
Through granite which titanic wars and groined
Yet also there encumbered sleepers groined —"
calls up the monumental massacre in war with
soldiers, "too fast in thought or death to be
bistored" When the speaker soldier looks at
the face of the enemy now dead, it looked
horrible, with a thousand pains that vision's
face was groined? The ironic comment of
the enemy about hopelessness and ending years
is shockingly real: —

"Whatever hope is yours was
my life also; I went hunting wild. After the
wildest beauty in the world which was like
not calm in eyes or braided hair. But
mocks the steady running of the bow, And
if it grieves, richer than here!"

Continuing —