**Il soldato**

Se dovessi morire, pensa solo questo di me:

che c’è qualche angolo del campo straniero

che sarà per sempre Inghilterra. Ci dovrebbe essere

In quella ricca terra una più ricca polvere nascosta;

una polvere di cui l’Inghilterra si fece, si formò, s'informò,

diede, una volta, i suoi fiori all’amore, le sue vie al vagabondaggio,

un corpo inglese, respirante aria inglese,

lavato dai fiumi, benedetto dal sole di casa.

E pensa, questo cuore, tolto tutto il male,

un battito nella mente eterna, nondimeno

restituisce da qualche parte i pensieri dati dall'Inghilterra;

le sue visioni ed i suoi suoni; sogna felice come il suo giorno;

e la risata, imparata dagli amici; e gentilezza,

nei cuori in pace, sotto un cielo inglese.

1. **Focus on the title of Rupert Brooke’s poem. What traits do you think a good soldier should possess?**

I think a good soldier should possess courage, honor, judgment, loyalty, duty, integrity and respect.

1. **Read the poem and say;**
2. Who is speaking?

A soldier.

1. If he is afraid of death;

No he isn’t. The soldier says that only life will be the appropriate thing to give to his great motherland in return for all the beautiful and great things she has given to him.

1. Where his grave will be;

He says that his grave will be England herself.

1. How his dead body will enrich the soil;

He will have left a monument of England in a foreign land, transforming a foreign soil into England.

1. Whether there is any emphasis on war;

Yes it is. The soldier says that die for England will be a salvation of his soul. It is therefore the most desirable of all fates.

1. Who do you think the poet is speaking to.

I think the soldier is talking to all the citizens of England or to his family.

1. **Work out the rhyme scheme and say what kind of poem this is.**

This is a sonnet based on the two major types of sonnet: Petrarchan and Shakespearean. Structurally the poem follows the Petrarchan mode but in its rhyme scheme it is on the Shakespearean mode: ABAB CDCD EFEF GG

1. **Find the images referring to death. What idea do they suggest?**

The images referring to death portray death for one’s country as a noble end and England as the noblest country for which to die. The soldier-speaker of the poem seeks to find redemption through sacrifice in the name of the country.

1. **List the images connected with England under the following headings:**

* **Landscape**
* **Inner growth and private feelings.**

England’s “flowers”, “her ways to roam”, and “English air” all represent the attitude and pride of the youth of the pre-industrial England. The soldier also has a sense of beauty of his country. In the final line of the first stanza, nature takes on a religious significance for the speaker. He is “washed by the rivers”, suggesting the purification of baptism, and “blest by the sun of home”. He concludes that only life will be the appropriate thing to give to his great motherland in return for all the beautiful and the great things she has given to him.

1. **Highlight the view of England conveyed. What traditional qualities does the poet underline?**

The poet underlines the attitude and pride of the soldier. Also the sense of nationalism is present in the sonnet.

1. **Define the tone of the poem and summarise its theme.**

“The soldier” is an elegy on sacrifice. The subject is ostensibly war but there is nothing in the poem that suggests warfare as such. Instead the poem justifies the soldier’s willing sacrifice on “a foreign field” an explanation that has more to do with idealized concepts about oneself and a one’s country that the causes of war. It reflects the strong sense of nationalism throughout Western civilization in the early twentieth century.