***LAST POST by Carol Ann Duffy***

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,

He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If poetry could tell it backwards, true, begin

that moment shrapnel scythed you to the stinking mud ...

but you get up, amazed, watch bled bad blood

run upwards from the slime into its wounds;

see lines and lines of British boys rewind

back to their trenches, kiss the photographs from home -

mothers, sweethearts, sisters, younger brothers

not entering the story now

to die and die and die.

Dulce - No - Decorum - No - Pro patria mori.

You walk away.

You walk away; drop your gun (fixed bayonet)

like all your mates do too -

Harry, Tommy, Wilfred, Edward, Bert -

and light a cigarette.

There's coffee in the square,

warm French bread

and all those thousands dead

are shaking dried mud from their hair

and queuing up for home. Freshly alive,

a lad plays Tipperary to the crowd, released

from History; the glistening, healthy horses fit for heroes, kings.

You lean against a wall,

your several million lives still possible

and crammed with love, work, children, talent, English beer, good food.

You see the poet tuck away his pocket-book and smile.

If poetry could truly tell it backwards,

then it would.

ANALYSIS:

Right from the first line the intelligent reader can understand that the poem is a quotation from Wilfred Owen’s “Dulce et Decorum est”. The Last Post was written by Carol Ann Duffy for the Remembrance Day as a celebration of the funeral after the First World War.

The two poems, Dulce et Decorum est by Wilfred Owen and The Last Post by Carol Ann Duffy, are extremely similar with the imagery they display in one’s mind. Carol Ann Duffy, having not been affected by war in her life, based her poem of Wilfred Owen’s, using 2 lines of Dulce et Decorum est. Carol Ann Duffy made an adaptation of the line in her poem which is “Dulce- No- Decorum- No- Pro patria mori”. This builds a strong image of disliking war in readers’ mind while reading.

The use of sound ‘t’ in the poem conveys the inhuman,  mechanization of carrying out one’s ‘duty’, through  obeying orders ,  leading to the near obliteration of a generation.

This is the life of the imagination and memory when we do resurrect people and [lost time](http://www.tusitala.org.uk/blog/aqa-carol-ann-duffys-hour-loves-timely-bargaining/), through the [anarchy of dream](http://www.tusitala.org.uk/blog/owens-strange-meeting-a-lastness-was-palpably-present/%22%20%5Co%20%22Owen%27s%20Strange%20Meeting%3A%20A%20Lastness%20was%20Palpably%20present). When the reader remembers ‘you’, you are not dead, you live in my head, I can see you and hear you and therefore you cannot be gone.

Duffy’s language reflects this [exploration of timing](http://www.tusitala.org.uk/blog/carol-ann-duffy-premonitions-two/%22%20%5Co%20%22Carol%20Ann%20Duffy%20%3A%20Premonitions%20Two), through the tension  between ‘faith’ and ‘faithlessness’. Here, Duffy acknowledges the creative responsibility of the writer to show emotions and events, compassionately. The reader can remember what was possible and in remembering ‘imagine’ with care,  unfinished lives whose potential gifts were destroyed by war.

The final stanza of the poet testifies the horrors of  war, to the events of the past and even the present is palpable.