

# Poem: Suicide in the Trenches by Siegfried Sassoon

Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen are generally named together as great war poets.

They shared their experiences of trenches together and a life-long friendship based upon the poetic expression of such experience.

- Sassoon was a soldier-poet like Owen and like him, was critical of war.
- War-poetry is also called as Trench-poetry
- It describes the naturalistic scene of war and horrific realism.

- Sassoon was born in 1886 and died in 1967.
- There is anger and satire in his poetic voice.
- For his courage on frontline, he was called as 'Mad Jack'.
- His notable works are:
  - The Daffodil Murderer.
  - The Old Huntsman and Other Poems
  - Counter Attack and Other Poems
  - War Poems

Suicide in the Trenches, the poem:

- Sassoon had sympathy with the young soldiers who were naïve and innocent and were sent to the horrors of war un-warned, which is well-represented in the poem.
- He, for the same reason, reserved his anger for officers and bureaucrats who enjoyed their lives at homes, in comfortable zones and kept giving the orders for war.
- The poem is written in a simple style and easy word-choice.

- The poem is written in two paragraphs.
- Both the paragraphs contrast in atmosphere and feelings.
- In first paragraph, writer describes the happy and optimistic nature of the young soldiers in effective words. He has no reason to 'grin' at life, but he projects his own good nature on life and stays satisfied.
- As the second stanza begins, there is a sudden change in the atmosphere and imagery. At emotional plane, the word 'grin' is replaced by 'glum'. There is oppressive atmosphere and no relief from 'rum' or other diversions.

- In a matter of fact and without bringing in any Euphemism, writer writes how the young man “puts bullet in his brain”.
- Writer brings up the realistic picture of trench.
- Two paragraphs can be seen as portraying the two perspectives: What is ideally expected by young soldiers when they join the war, and what are the emotions when they see the reality of the war.
- Writer has used the words precisely and images do most of the work of evocating the desired feelings of shock, horror and thoughtful mourning at the loss of innocent youth.

Thank You