

Anthem for a Doomed Youth

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?

--Only the monstrous anger of the guns.

Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle

Can patter out their hasty orisons.

No mockeries for them from prayers or bells,

Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,-

The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;

And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?

Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes

Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.

The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;

Their flowers the tenderness of silent minds,

And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

Wilfred Owen (1893-1918)