**Wilfred Owen's poetry in Britten's "War Requiem"**

**"Anthem for Doomed Youth"** (p.131)

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 at all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-byes.
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.

**"But I was Looking at the Permanent Stars" *(first 7 lines)***

Bugles sang, saddening the evening air;
And bugles answered, sorrowful to hear.
Voices of boys were by the river-side.
Sleep mothered them; and left the twilight sad.
The shadow of the morrow weighed on men.
Voices of old despondency resigned,
Bowed by the shadow of the morrow, slept.

 *"***The Next War"**

Out there, we've walked quite friendly up to Death:
Sat down and eaten with him, cool and bland,-
Pardoned his spilling mess-tins in our hand.
We've sniffed the green thick odour of his breath,-
Our eyes wept, but our courage didn't writhe.
He's spat at us with bullets and he's coughed
Shrapnel. We chorused when he sang aloft;
We whistled while he shaved us with his scythe.
Oh, Death was never enemy of ours!
We laughed at him, we leagued with him, old chum.
No soldier's paid to kick against his powers.
We laughed, knowing that better men would come,
And greater wars; when each proud fighter brags
He wars on Death - for Life; not men - for flags.

**"Sonnet on Seeing a Piece of Our Heavy Artillery Brought into Action"**

(lines 1, 2 ,5, 6, 13, & 14)

Be slowly lifted up, thou long black arm,
Great gun towering toward Heaven, about to curse;
Reach at that arrogance which needs thy harm,
And beat it down before its sins grow worse;
But when thy spell be cast complete and whole,
May God curse thee, and cut thee from our soul!

 "**Futility**" (p.54)

Move him into the sun -
Gently its touch awoke him once,
At home, whispering of fields unsown.
Always it woke him, even in France,
Until this morning and this snow.
If anything might rouse him now
The kind old sun will know.

Think how it wakes the seeds -
Woke, once, the clays of a cold star.
Are limbs, so dear-acheived, are sides,
Full-nerved - still warm - too hard to stir?
Was it for this the clay grew tall?

- O what made fatuous sunbeams toil
To break earth's sleep at all?

**"The Parable of the Old Man and the Young"**

So Abram rose, and clave the wood, and went,
And took the fire with him, and a knife.
And as they sojourned both of them together,
Isaac the first-born spake and said, My Father,
Behold the preparations, fire and iron,
But where the lamb for this burnt-offering?
Then Abram bound the youth with belts and straps,
And builded parapets and trenched there,
And streched forth the knife to slay his son.
When lo! and angel called him out of heaven,
Saying, Lay not thy hand upon the lad,
Neither do anything to him. Behold,
A ram, caught in a thicket by its horns;
Offer the Ram of Pride instead of him.

But the old man would not, so
but slew his son, -
And half the seed of Europe, one by one.

 *"***The End"**

After the blast of lightning from the East,
The flourish of loud clouds, the Chariot Throne;
After the drums of time have rolled and ceased,
And by the bronze west long retreat is blown,
Shall life renew these bodies? Of a truth
All death will He annul, all tears assuage? -
Fill the void veins of Life again with youth,
And wash, with an immortal water, Age?
When I do ask white Age he saith not so:
"My head hangs weighed with snow."
And when I hearken to the Earth, she saith:
"My fiery heart shrinks, aching. It is death.
Mine ancient scars shall not be glorified,
Nor my titanic tears, the sea, be dried."

 "**At a Calvary Near the Ancre"**

One ever hangs where shelled roads part.
In this war He too lost a limb,
But His disciples hide apart;
And now the Soldiers bear with Him.

Near Golgatha strolls many a priest,
And in their faces there is pride
That they were flesh-marked by the Beast
By whom the gentle Christ's denied.

The scribes on all the people shove
and bawl allegiance to the state,

But they who love the greater love
Lay down their life; they do not hate.

 *"***Strange Meeting"** (p.159)

It seemed that out of battle I escaped
Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped
Through granites which titanic wars had groined.
Yet also there encumbered sleepers groaned,
Too fast in thought or death to be bestirred.
Then, as I probed them, one sprang up, and stared
With piteous recognition in fixed eyes,
Lifting distressful hands as if to bless.
And no guns thumped, or down the flues made moan.
"Strange friend," I said, "here is no cause to mourn."

"None", said the other, "save the undone years,
The hopelessness. Whatever hope is yours,
Was my life also; I went hunting wild
After the wildest beauty in the world,
For by my glee might many men have laughed,
And of my weeping something had been left,
Which must die now. I mean the truth untold,
The pity of war, the pity war distilled.
Now men will go content with what we spoiled.
Or, discontent, boil boldly, and be spilled.
They will be swift with swiftness of the tigress,
None will break ranks, though nations trek from progress.
Miss we the march of this retreating world
Into vain citadels that are not walled.
Then, when much blood had clogged their chariot-wheels
I would go up and wash them from sweet wells,
Even from wells we sunk too deep for war,
Even from the sweetest wells that ever were.
I am the enemy you killed, my friend.
I knew you in this dark; for so you frowned
Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed.
I parried; but my hands were loath and cold.
Let us sleep now..."