

## During the war

Look at the extract below which is from 'Part Two: France 1916':

Price was reading the roll call ... He hurried from one unanswered name to the next. Byrne, Hunt, Jones, Tipper, Wood, Leslie, Barnes, Studd, Richardson, Savile, Thompson, Hodgson, Birkenshaw, Llewellyn, Francis, Arkwright, Duncan, Shea, Simons, Anderson, Blum, Fairbrother. Names came pattering into the dusk, bodying out the places of their forbears, the villages and towns where the telegram would be delivered, the houses where the blinds would be drawn, where low moans would come in the afternoon behind closed doors; and the places that had borne them, which would be like nunneries, like dead towns without their life or purpose, without the sound of fathers and their children, without young men at the factories or in the fields, with no husbands for the women, no deep sound of voices in the inns, with the children who would have been born, who would have grown and worked or painted, even governed, left ungenerated in their fathers' shattered flesh that lay in stinking shellholes in the beet-crop soil, leaving their homes to put up only granite slabs in place of living flesh on whose inhuman surface the moss and lichen would cast their crawling green indifference.

From: pp.189-190, Vintage edition, © Sebastian Faulks, 1994.

Now read Wilfred Owen's sonnet 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' (written during the War):

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 now for them; no prayers nor 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 good-byes.  
 The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;  
 Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,  
 And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

1. What similarities can you see between Faulks' prose and Owen's poem? Think about language and imagery in particular. Why do you think these similarities exist?
2. Have a go at re-writing Faulks' text as a poem in the style of Owen's 'Anthem' or, alternatively, re-write Owen's poem in the style of Faulks' prose.
3. After completing question 2 discuss with a partner the difficulties you faced in transforming the text and how you overcame these problems.