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| Childhood is the Kingdom Where Nobody Dies |  |
| by [Edna St. Vincent Millay](http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/160) | |
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| Childhood is not from birth to a certain age and at a certain age  The child is grown, and puts away childish things.  Childhood is the kingdom where nobody dies.  Nobody that matters, that is. Distant relatives of course  Die, whom one never has seen or has seen for an hour,  And they gave one candy in a pink-and-green stripéd bag, or a jack-knife,  And went away, and cannot really be said to have lived at all.  And cats die. They lie on the floor and lash their tails,  And their reticent fur is suddenly all in motion  With fleas that one never knew were there,  Polished and brown, knowing all there is to know,  Trekking off into the living world.  You fetch a shoe-box, but it's much too small, because she won't curl up now:  So you find a bigger box, and bury her in the yard, and weep.  But you do not wake up a month from then, two months  A year from then, two years, in the middle of the night  And weep, with your knuckles in your mouth, and say Oh, God! Oh, God!  Childhood is the kingdom where nobody dies that matters,  —mothers and fathers don't die.  And if you have said, "For heaven's sake, must you always be kissing a person?"  Or, "I do wish to gracious you'd stop tapping on the window with your thimble!"  Tomorrow, or even the day after tomorrow if you're busy having fun,  Is plenty of time to say, "I'm sorry, mother."  To be grown up is to sit at the table with people who have died,  who neither listen nor speak;  Who do not drink their tea, though they always said  Tea was such a comfort.  Run down into the cellar and bring up the last jar of raspberries;  they are not tempted.  Flatter them, ask them what was it they said exactly  That time, to the bishop, or to the overseer, or to Mrs. Mason;  They are not taken in.  Shout at them, get red in the face, rise,  Drag them up out of their chairs by their stiff shoulders and shake  them and yell at them;  They are not startled, they are not even embarrassed; they slide  back into their chairs.  Your tea is cold now.  You drink it standing up,  And leave the house. Grass[Grass](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/174301#poem) By [Carl Sandburg](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/carl-sandburg) 1878–1967Carl Sandburg  Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo.  Shovel them under and let me work—  I am the grass; I cover all.  And pile them high at Gettysburg  And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.  Shovel them under and let me work.  Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:  What place is this?  Where are we now?  I am the grass.  Let me work.  Shovel them under and let me work—  I am the grass; I cover all.  And pile them high at Gettysburg  And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.  Shovel them under and let me work.  Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:  What place is this?  Where are we now?  I am the grass.  Let me work.  http://www.poetry-archive.com/p_pic.gifILE the bodies high at Austerlitz and  Waterloo,  Shovel them under and let me work--  I am the grass; I cover all.  And pile them high at Gettysburg  And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.  Shovel them under and let me work.  Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:  What place is this?  Where are we now?  I am the grass.  Let me work.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Dulce et Decorum Est |  | | by [Wilfred Owen](http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/305) | | |  | | | Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,  Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,  Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs  And towards our distant rest began to trudge.  Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots  But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;  Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots  Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind.  Gas! Gas! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling,  Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;  But someone still was yelling out and stumbling  And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime...  Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,  As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.  In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,  He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.  If in some smothering dreams you too could pace  Behind the wagon that we flung him in,  And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,  His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;  If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood  Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,  Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud  Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—  My friend, you would not tell with such high zest  To children ardent for some desperate glory,  The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est*  *Pro patria mori*. |  |  'pity this busy monster, manunkind' pity this busy monster, manunkind,  not. Progress is a comfortable disease:  your victim (death and life safely beyond)  plays with the bigness of his littleness  --- electrons deify one razorblade  into a mountainrange; lenses extend  unwish through curving wherewhen till unwish  returns on its unself.  A world of made  is not a world of born --- pity poor flesh  and trees, poor stars and stones, but never this  fine specimen of hypermagical  ultraomnipotence. We doctors know  a hopeless case if --- listen: there's a hell  of a good universe next door; let's go  E. E. Cummings Snowbanks North of the House Those great sweeps of snow that stop suddenly six feet from the house ... Thoughts that go so far. The boy gets out of high school and reads no more books; the son stops calling home. The mother puts down her rolling pin and makes no more bread. And the wife looks at her husband one night at a party, and loves him no more. The energy leaves the wine, and the minister falls leaving the church. It will not come closer the one inside moves back, and the hands touch nothing, and are safe.  The father grieves for his son, and will not leave the room where the coffin stands. He turns away from his wife, and she sleeps alone.  And the sea lifts and falls all night, the moon goes on through the unattached heavens alone.  The toe of the shoe pivots in the dust ... And the man in the black coat turns, and goes back down the hill. No one knows why he came, or why he turned away, and did not climb the hill. Bly, Robert. 1981. |  |