

"Mametz Wood" is a poem written by Welsh poet Owen Sheers that explores the horrific aftermath of the Battle of the Somme during World War I. The poem explores and presents the theme of conflict vividly in various different ways, capturing the brutality of war.

Immediately, Sheers starts by describing the aftermath: "for years afterwards the farmers found them - / the 'wasted young'". The fact that it took "years" to "[find]" them highlights to readers how unrelenting the true reality of war/conflict is as they couldn't even be buried properly. Furthermore, the families of these "wasted young" will have experienced a lot of mental pain and suffering as their sons were not even remembered for their heroic acts. "Wasted" implies how all the young soldiers will never get their life back and it immediately creates a solemn tone throughout the poem. Sheers does this with intent to make readers feel a deep sense of sympathy for those who were affected. In addition, Sheers explores the war and its everlasting consequences when it says "Out of bone, the china plate of a shouldered blade". The repetition of the harsh "ch" sound is likewise to that of a gun shooting. Sheers skillfully does this to emphasise to readers how the war will never leave them even after they are dead. Furthermore, a "china plate" connotes fragility and value and this shows how the young were never fit to fight as their lives were precious yet they lost them. To reinforce this, Sheers juxtaposes the phrase

"broken birds egg of a skull". He does this to ~~the~~ contrast their young lives and ultimately their untimely deaths. A "birds egg" connotes fragility and new life yet is contrasted to "skull".

As we read on, ~~then~~ ~~we~~ we are told that the "earth stands sentinel." Sheers personifies the earth as almost grieving as if it is ["standing"] out of respect for the fallen soldiers. In the Battle of the Somme there were 4,000 casualties and it was very horrific. In addition, "a broken mosaic of bone" implies how brutal war is and the "mosaic" suggests how mixed up all their bodies are. The quote <sup>paused</sup> "mid dance-marabou" ~~also~~ suggests how they only had each other in their deaths and were unified. Sheers perhaps uses the word 'dance' as a microcosm of the soldiers lives and as his 'paused' they have unnaturally died. This forces the reader to feel sorry for the casualties and it presents conflict as futile and vicious.

Sheers uses enjambment to reflect how life will proceed as normal after their deaths as they were forgotten and Sheers ~~is~~ may have wrote the poem to ensure they were recognised. This is reinforced as he went to France to film a documentary and found a mass grave. This links to their "absent tongues" as they have no voice to speak upon.