**1916 -** Battle of Verdun, Battle of the Somme. President Wilson re-elected with campaign slogan, “He kept us out of the war.” Rasputin is murdered.

The Troop Ship - 1916

BY [ISAAC ROSENBERG](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/isaac-rosenberg) (1890 – 1918)

Grotesque and queerly huddled

Contortionists to twist

The sleepy soul to a sleep,

We lie all sorts of ways

And cannot sleep.

The wet wind is so cold,

And the lurching men so careless,

That, should you drop to a doze,

Wind’s fumble or men’s feet

Is on your face.

**1917 -** Germans issue Zimmerman Telegram to Mexico, United States declares war on Germany, draft begins. U.S. troops land in France. Third Battle of Ypres. Bolshevik uprising in Russia, led by Lenin, headed by Trotsky.

Anthem for Doomed Youth - 1917

BY [WILFRED OWEN](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/wilfred-owen) (1893 – 1918)

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 goodbyes.

      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.

# The Death Bed - 1916

BY [SIEGFRIED SASSOON](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/siegfried-sassoon) (1886 – 1967)

He drowsed and was aware of silence heaped

Round him, unshaken as the steadfast walls;

Aqueous like floating rays of amber light,

Soaring and quivering in the wings of sleep.

Silence and safety; and his mortal shore

Lipped by the inward, moonless waves of death.

Someone was holding water to his mouth.

He swallowed, unresisting; moaned and dropped

Through crimson gloom to darkness; and forgot

The opiate throb and ache that was his wound.

Water—calm, sliding green above the weir;

Water—a sky-lit alley for his boat,

Bird-voiced, and bordered with reflected flowers

And shaken hues of summer: drifting down,

He dipped contented oars, and sighed, and slept.

Night, with a gust of wind, was in the ward,

Blowing the curtain to a gummering curve.

Night. He was blind; he could not see the stars

Glinting among the wraiths of wandering cloud;

Queer blots of colour, purple, scarlet, green,

Flickered and faded in his drowning eyes.

Rain—he could hear it rustling through the dark;

Fragrance and passionless music woven as one;

Warm rain on drooping roses; pattering showers

That soak the woods; not the harsh rain that sweeps

Behind the thunder, but a trickling peace,

Gently and slowly washing life away.

He stirred, shifting his body; then the pain

Leaped like a prowling beast, and gripped and tore

His groping dreams with grinding claws and fangs.

But someone was beside him; soon he lay

Shuddering because that evil thing had passed.

And death, who'd stepped toward him, paused and stared.

Light many lamps and gather round his bed.

Lend him your eyes, warm blood, and will to live.

Speak to him; rouse him; you may save him yet.

He's young; he hated war; how should he die

When cruel old campaigners win safe through?

But death replied: “I choose him.” So he went,

And there was silence in the summer night;

Silence and safety; and the veils of sleep.

Then, far away, the thudding of the guns.

Source: The Old Huntsman and Other Poems (1917)