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Class B.A. I  
Paper-I  
Topic - War Poetry

### war poetry

Like the first, the second war also produced a number of poets of varied poetic gifts. The outstanding of these are Sidney Keyes, Alan Seeger, Roy Fuller, Alan Ross and John Purdy. The poets accepted the war without any surprise and looked at it without putting on romantic classes. They produced direct and journalistic poetry. They knew the horrors of war and after the fashion of Wilde, they were aware of the grim tragedy awaiting the humanity. The greatest achievement of these poets is their success to make poetry and clear and free from obscurity.

The most brilliant of these poets was Sidney Keyes who died at the very early age of twenty-one. He died while fighting in Tunisia. In an attempt to conquer death he submitted to it.

Edith Sitwell is perhaps the only poet during the last twenty years who could harmonize the claims of the outer and the inner life. In the last twenty years, her personality has undergone tremendous changes. She is now not the rhythmic verifier of the twenties who tried to present simultaneously several simultaneous aspects of objects, to mingle planes and dimensions. Her poems were mainly for recitation as their highest achievements were to create musical sound effects. She had no concern with the outside world, but she had also no concern with the spiritual problems of the world that came to her in the years of war when she got herself involved with affairs of her age. She began to suffer with the rest of her countrymen and gave expression to her deepest emotions aroused



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by the onslaughts of war on life and culture  
in her street songs, and Green Songs. It  
was at this time that she wrote that wonder-  
ful poem still falls the Rain:-

"Still falls the rain  
dark as the world of man, black as our loss  
Blind as the nineteen hundred and forty nine  
nails  
upon the cross  
still falls the rain".

The greatness of Edith Sitwell lies in her  
ability to maintain faith in men and in God  
in the midst of destruction and disintegration  
of the values of the world. In an age when  
the despairing and the morbid lines of  
Rilke and Eliot envelope us like dark  
winter nights and produce in us a sense of  
despair and futility, Edith Sitwell's bright optimism  
and sympathy for all make us again burst  
in the sun.

"And I the primeval clay  
That has known earth's grief and harvest's  
happiness,  
Seeing mankind's dark seed time, come  
Forgive and bless all men like the holy  
light."

Edith Sitwell in her volumes after  
the war - The Song of the Cold (1945) The  
Shadow of Cain (1947), The Canticle of the Rose  
(1949) and Gardeners and Astronomers (1953)  
writes of the noble love of man for his  
brother and man. Her awareness of the dangers  
of nuclear weapons makes her write up great  
poems of the Atomic Bomb where she expresses  
her bitterness against these missiles of destruc-  
tion and her deep love for humanity.  
Edith Sitwell is undoubtedly the greatest asset  
of modern English poetry.

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