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SEMESTER 2

**AEC
(ABILITY ENHANCEMENT COURSE)
COMPULSORY ENGLISH**

UNIT 1: POETRY

**WILFRED OWEN
ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH**

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Anthem for Doomed Youth

Wilfred Owen

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.



Short Questions:

1. Who wrote *Anthem for Doomed Youth*?

Wilfred Owen wrote *Anthem for Doomed Youth*.

2. What kind of poem is Wilfred Owen's *Anthem for Doomed Youth*?

Anthem for Doomed Youth is an anti-war poem.

3. To which country did Wilfred Owen belong?

Wilfred Owen belonged to England.

4. What was Wilfred Owen's profession?

Wilfred Owen was a poet and a soldier who fought in the First World War.

5. What is the meaning of 'Anthem'?

'Anthem' means a formal song of a group.

6. Who are the 'doomed youth'?

'Doomed' means unfortunate. The young men are 'doomed' as they are sent by their country to fight and die in the battlefield.

7. Which War forms the setting of *Anthem for Doomed Youth*?

The First World War (1914-18) is the setting of *Anthem for Doomed Youth*.

8. What is the theme of *Anthem for Doomed Youth*?

The theme of *Anthem for Doomed Youth* is the horror of war.

9. What are 'passing bells'?

'Passing bells' are bells that ring in church after someone's death (passing away).

10. Why are passing-bells for dead soldiers meaningless?

Dead soldiers cannot hear their 'passing-bells' - so this ritual is meaningless for them.

11. How do the doomed youth die in the battlefield?

The doomed youth die like ‘cattle’ in the battlefield.

12. What weapons are mentioned in the opening lines of the poem?

Owen mentions guns and rifles in the opening lines of the poem.

13. What is the meaning of ‘orisons’?

‘Orisons’ are prayers.

14. What are referred to by ‘mockeries’?

The traditional funeral prayers, bells and mourning for the dead soldiers seem ‘mockeries’ or ‘ridiculous’ as they were sent to die in the war.

15. What do the soldiers hear as they die in the battlefield?

The soldiers hear noise of gun shells as they die in the battlefield.

16. What are shells in a battlefield?

Shells are explosives fired from large guns like artillery, tanks and warships.

17. What is meant by ‘wailing shells’?

‘Wailing shells’ refer to the terrifying noise of the shells flying through the air in the battlefield.



18. What is a choir?

A choir is a group of singers performing in a church service.

19. What figures of speech is used in “*The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells*”?

The figures of speech used here is personification – the noise of the artillery seems like person wailing (crying).

20. What are bugles?

Bugles are musical instruments used for military signals.



21. What are the ‘sad shires’?

‘Shires’ are the different places in England. The people of the shires are ‘sad’ as the soldiers who lived there have died in the war.

22. What is great tragedy in ‘And bugles calling for them from sad shires’?

The great tragedy here is that the dead soldiers will not respond to the call of the bugles calling them back to their home towns.

23. What literary device is used in ‘*What candles may be held to speed them all?*’

The literary device used is rhetorical question – a question which hints at the answer.

24. What function do the candles perform for the dead soldiers?

Candles guide spirits into afterlife during the funeral. There is no one to light candles for dead soldiers in the battlefield.

25. What is meant by '*not in the hands of boys*'?

In church funerals candles are held by young altar boys. There is no one to hold candles for dead soldiers in the battlefield.



26. How does Owen describe the final moments of a dying soldier's life?

There are no candles in a battlefield but a dying soldier's eyes shine with the fire of blazing guns.

27. Who are the girls mentioned in Owen's poem?

The girls refer to the wives, sisters, daughters of the soldiers who died in war.

28. What is meant by 'pallor' of women?

'Pallor' refers to the pale faces of women who are heartbroken by the untimely loss of their husbands, brothers, sons in the war.

29. What is a 'pall'?

A pall is a white cloth used in a church to cover a coffin during funeral.

30. What will be the 'pall' for dead soldiers?

The pale brows of girls who lost their loved ones in war will be the palls for the dead soldiers.

31. What will the dead soldiers get instead of flowers?

Instead of flowers, the dead soldiers will be remembered with love by people (tenderness of patient minds).

32. When does 'drawing-down of blinds' take place?

The window blinds are drawn at dusk (evening, end of the day).

33. What does the drawing down of blinds represent?

The drawing-down of window blinds in the evening symbolizes death (end of a day). People continue to live normal lives but the doomed young soldiers are lost in the darkness of death.



34. Why is there no church funeral for the dead soldiers?

There is no church funeral for dead soldiers as they die far away from home in the battlefield.

35. What is the message of Owen's poem?

Owen's poem, *Anthem for Doomed Youth* is an anti-war poem that shows the uselessness of war through the untimely deaths of young soldiers.