

LTEN 132: MODERN IRISH LITERATURE

MADNESS AND
HAUNTING

•
IN POST-HOME
RULE IRELAND



Have you ever wandered through the
Irish moors and felt the breath of the
dead on your neck?

Do tales of tortured souls and mad murders entice
you?

Then LTEN 132 is for you!

This course looks at the traumatic years after Ireland established independence as a nation. We will focus on how the violence of this period manifests in the gothic themes of haunting and madness that are present throughout contemporary Irish literature, film and music. **This course fulfills both the "B" requirement for literature majors and the Social identities requirement for the Literature/Cultural studies majors.**

Summer Session 1
UCSD Literature Department
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Dulce et Decorum Est

By [Wilfred Owen](#)

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 gas-shells dropping softly 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.

Glory of Women
By [Siegfried Sassoon](#)

You love us when we're heroes, home on leave,
Or wounded in a mentionable place.
You worship decorations; you believe
That chivalry redeems the war's disgrace.
You make us shells. You listen with delight
By tales of dirt and danger fondly thrilled.
You crown our distant ardours while we fight,
And mourn our laurelled memories when we're killed.
You can't believe that British troops "retire"
When hell's last horror breaks them, and they run,
Trampling the terrible corpses—blind with blood.
O German mother dreaming by the fire,
While you are knitting socks to send your son,
His face is trodden deeper in the mud.

Break of Day in the Trenches

By [Isaac Rosenberg](#)

The darkness crumbles away.
It is the same old druid Time as ever,
Only a live thing leaps my hand,
A queer sardonic rat,
As I pull the parapet's poppy
To stick behind my ear.
Droll rat, they would shoot you if they knew
Your cosmopolitan sympathies.
Now you have touched this English hand
You will do the same to a German
Soon, no doubt, if it be your pleasure
To cross the sleeping green between.
It seems you inwardly grin as you pass
Strong eyes, fine limbs, haughty athletes,
Less chanced than you for life,
Bonds to the whims of murder,
Sprawled in the bowels of the earth,
The torn fields of France.
What do you see in our eyes
At the shrieking iron and flame
Hurled through still heavens?
What quaver—what heart aghast?
Poppies whose roots are in man's veins
Drop, and are ever dropping;
But mine in my ear is safe—
Just a little white with the dust.

June 1915

Charlotte Mary Mew

Who thinks of June's first rose today?

Only some child, perhaps, with shining eyes and
rough bright hair will reach it down.

In a green sunny lane, to us almost as far away
As are the fearless stars from these veiled lamps of town.

What's little June to a great broken world with eyes gone dim
From too much looking on the face of grief, the face of dread?

Or what's the broken word to June and him

Of the small eager hand, the shining eyes, the rough bright head?

Clearing Station

Wilhelm Klemm

Straw rustling everywhere.

The candle-stumps stand there staring solemnly.

Across the nocturnal vault of the church

Moans go drifting and choking words.

There's a stench of blood, pus, **** and sweat.

Bandages ooze away underneath torn uniforms.

Clammy trembling hands and wasted faces.

Bodies stay propped up as their dying heads slump
down.

In the distance the battle thunders grimly on,

Day and night, groaning and grumbling non-stop,

And to the dying men patiently waiting for their graves

It sounds for all the world like the words of God.