

The Last Laugh

By Wilfred Owen

'O Jesus Christ! I'm hit,' he said; and died.
Whether he vainly cursed or prayed indeed,
 The Bullets chirped—In vain, vain, vain!
 Machine-guns chuckled—Tut-tut! Tut-tut!
 And the Big Gun guffawed.

Another sighed,—'O Mother,—mother,—Dad!'
Then smiled at nothing, childlike, being dead.
 And the lofty Shrapnel-cloud
 Leisurely gestured,—Fool!
 And the splinters spat, and tittered.

'My Love!' one moaned. Love-languid seemed his mood,
Till slowly lowered, his whole face kissed the mud.
 And the Bayonets' long teeth grinned;
 Rabbles of Shells hooted and groaned;
 And the Gas hissed.

Notes:

POL Participants: several changes to punctuation have been changed, and the line "And the falling splinters tittered" was changed to "And the splinters spat, and tittered", in June 2014.

Source: *The Poems of Wilfred Owen*, edited by Jon Stallworthy (W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1986)