

(Homecomings)

Escape

The afternoon sun cast its warm glow upon the path as I strolled down it, towards the village where my home had been since childhood. Such a long time ago it seems. Even though the years since had not been many, I had grown, matured and become a man in what seemed to be a short space of time, as if needing to rush the process. Although only nineteen I wore the weary burden of an old man on my brow. Constantly tiered of walking and having to stay awake, longing for some peace and a quiet corner I could call my own, to catch a break from the unrelenting weight I carried on my back but now I was home, where familiar objects came to greet me, as if happy to see me again. As I walked through the village, I passed bill's tractor, sitting in his yard where it had always been, rusting away as the grass grew tall around it, oblivious of the world beyond.

What was it I was looking for? Why had I come here? I must remember, I must, remember. So unfair the tricks played by our mind, robbing us of the memories we hold so dear but I will never forget my home, my family, the people and place that had taken care of me as a child. Every turn down its narrow lanes, every corner, every stone.

Approaching the path to my house, I opened its gate. Just then, I felt an all-mighty tremble, as the walls of my childhood home came tumbling down with a loud boom, loud enough to almost burst my ears. Then an unnerving shout in a familiar voice, 'Come on lad! Look lively, we're about to go over the top!' What, what does he mean? As my mind started to clear, the starkness of my reality hit me with a resounding thud. Like a sack of potatoes being thrown from the back of a truck and landing ungracefully in the dirt. 'Yes Sergeant', I found myself automatically saying and as if possessed by another I instantly grabbed hold of my rifle, which had been cradled in my arms the entire time. Although ashamed of dozing off moments before the big advance, I was never the less happy to steal a brief moment from the tight clutches of Ares. Of whom I had no chance of escape, for he had me tightly in his grasp and was unwilling to let go, until I had paid my dues to him. A price all of us here in his domain owed.

Standing to, I waited in the silence... The whistles blew and with an energy I thought had long left me, I sprang up and out of the trench, as if eager to meet my fate. Into the maelstrom of a thousand bullet cracks I went. Enough to unnerve the most resolved among us.

Dreams of home will have to wait but I shall always remember.

Construct Methodology

If I had used 'Homecoming' for the **title**, I could initially create a false sense of complacency before revealing the twist but I chose escape, since it reflected how the protagonist wished to escape his predicament in the only way he could, by remembering his home. I also left the title vague and subtly connected on purpose, so that I wouldn't give away the twist in the narrative but at the same time it hints at an ulterior purpose, intent on causing the audience to not completely relax. Thereby helping to portray the **constant sense of unease** felt by the protagonist.

During this short piece I gradually lead the audience from a state of bliss to a progressively **worsening scenario**, as the protagonist slowly realises his predicament. For instance, in the first paragraph he is home but then in the second he refers to remembering home and by the third he fully realises that he is far from home and in a less than ideal situation. Towards this, each time I mention the word 'but' I follow it with a mention of his home, which is a form of **escapism** for the protagonist and acts to tie the piece together. While to add to the sense of a worsening situation, the first mention of home is one where he is at home, whereas the other two times he merely refers to remembering home.

Additionally each time I move the situation on to a less idealistic plain, I do so with an abruptness manifested by a change of paragraph or **sudden directional change** in the narrative. This is designed to unnerve the audience. Not allowing them to relax and mimics suddenly waking up from a dream, which is what eventually happens to the protagonist after an artillery shell lands nearby, rudely awakening him from his blissful slumber. Hence in the first paragraph he is at home, in the second he is confused, the third he wakes and the fourth he leaves the trench to cross no man's land.

Throughout the narrative remains subtle but honest by leaving **clues** as to the what is in fact reality for the protagonist. In the first paragraph I describe his mental state, brought about by his experience of soldiering on the Western front. While in the second he is now confused because he is actually dreaming and trying to figure out what is happening. Before finally in the third paragraph, after it dawns on him that he is not at home, I explain that he was dreaming, while in reality being in a terrible place.

The piece also acts as a form of **remembrance** but with the twist of taking a first-person point of view, of wishing to remember his home. In comparison to us remembering the sacrifice of the first world war and likewise finishes with the word 'remember.'