The War Correspondent Study Guide

The War Correspondent by Ciarán Carson

BOOKRAGS

Contents

Introduction

“The War Correspondent,” by Irish poet Ciaran Carson, appears in Carson’s collection, *Breaking News* (2003). It consists of seven poems, all but one of which are set in the Crimea at the time of the Crimean War. This war took place between 1854 and 1856 and pitted a British and French alliance against Russia for influence in the Near East. The Crimea is a region off the Black Sea in present-day Ukraine.

“The War Correspondent” is based on dispatches from the Crimea written by Anglo-Irish war correspondent William Howard Russell for readers of the *Times*, a London newspaper. In his notes to *Breaking News*, Carson writes that “The War Correspondent” is “especially indebted to his [Russell’s] writing; in many instances I have taken his words *verbatim*, or have changed them only slightly to accommodate rhyme and rhythm.” Taken together, the seven poems in “The War Correspondent” convey a sense of the wastefulness and destruction of war, set against the ever-recurring rhythms of nature.

Author Biography

Ciaran Carson was born on October 9, 1948, in Belfast, Northern Ireland, the son of Liam Carson, a postman. He acquired his taste for language and storytelling very early. He recalls that when he was two or three, his father would tell his children stories in Gaelic every evening, and each story would continue (at least it seemed that way to the child) for weeks.

Carson was educated at Queen's University in Belfast, from which he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English. From 1974 to 1975, he worked as a schoolteacher in Belfast, after which he became the Traditional Arts officer for the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, in Belfast, a position he held until 1998.

Carson's first volume of poetry was *The New Estate* (1976), followed by *The Irish For No* (1987). In the latter collection, Carson, who was raised as a Catholic, reflects with humor and satire on the violent situation in Belfast. This book appeared during the civil conflict in Northern Ireland known as "the Troubles," in which the majority Protestants, who wanted Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom, clashed with the minority Catholics, many of whom wanted a united Ireland free of British rule. The conflict, which also involved the terrorist organization, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the British Army, began in 1969 and lasted nearly three decades and resulted in thousands of deaths. Carson's *Belfast Confetti* (1993), which was highly acclaimed by critics, also examines Belfast and its violent history.

Carson's fourth volume of poetry, *First Language* (1994), focuses on language, examining how in Belfast, English, Gaelic, and slang intersect, often resulting in a failure of communication. It was awarded the first ever T. S. Eliot Prize for the outstanding book of poetry published in Great Britain in 1994.

Opera Et Cetera (1996) is notable for its puns and other wordplay, as well as its form. Each ten-line poem is written in rhyming couplets. Other poetry collections by Carson are *The Alexandrine Plan: Versions of Sonnets by Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and Rimbaud* (1998), *The Twelfth of Never* (1998), and *Selected Poems* (2001). *Breaking News* (2003) won the prestigious Forward Prize for best collection of poetry. This volume includes the seven poems that make up "The War Correspondent." In 2006, Carson published *The Midnight Court*, a translation of Brian Merriman's eighteenth-century poem in Irish.

Carson has also published fiction in other genres, including *Shamrock Tea* (2000), a novel set in 1950s Belfast, and *Fishing for Amber: A Long Story* (2000). He has also written nonfiction, including *The Star Factory* (1997), a memoir of his life growing up in Belfast, and *Last Night's Fun: A Book about Irish Traditional Music* (1996). Carson is an accomplished musician who plays the flute. He also published a translation, *The Inferno of Dante Alighieri: A New Translation* (2002), which was awarded the Oxford Weidenfeld Translation Prize.

In 1998, Carson was appointed a professor of English at Queen's University of Belfast. As of 2006, he was director of the Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry.

Carson married in 1982, and the couple had two sons and a daughter.

Plot Summary

Gallipoli

“Gallipoli” is the first of the seven poems that make up “The War Correspondent.” It gives a vivid description of the slum regions of Gallipoli, Turkey, at the time when British and French forces were billeted there on their way to the Crimea. The ten-stanza poem presents Gallipoli as a teeming, cosmopolitan, polyglot city. The first four stanzas all begin with the word “take,” as the poet, drawing on the work of the war correspondent William Howard Russell, evokes the sights and smells of various places around the world to give the reader a picture of the impoverished areas of Gallipoli.

The first reference is to Billingsgate, a well-known fish market in London, with its “scaling-knives and fish.” This is followed by a reference to outhouses in “English farmers’ yards” that “reek of dung and straw,” then horses in Dublin, Ireland. The next three stanzas extend the range of associations almost worldwide, beginning with references to pagodas from a “Chinese Delftware dish.” (Delftware is a Dutch imitation of Chinese porcelain from the Ming Dynasty that was first imported into the Netherlands in the early seventeenth century.) The scope of the comparisons then expands to ships bound for Benares, India, to collect massive amounts of tea.

Stanza 3 describes the houses in Gallipoli, introducing them with a reference to a “back street in Boulogne,” a city in France, then to chimney stacks in Sheffield, a town in northern England, that belch out smoke like a fleet of British ships. There is another comparison to “Irish round towers.” These are early medieval stone towers, still found in Ireland, which may originally have been bell towers or places of refuge. (They are generally found in the vicinity of a church.)

Stanza 4 begins with an evocation of the rich scents in the arcades of Bologna, a city in Italy, including garlic, oregano and “rotten meat.” These arcades are “as labyrinthine as the rifle-factories of Springfield.” This is a reference to the Springfield Armory in Springfield, Massachusetts, which has manufactured weapons for the U.S. armed forces since 1835, including the Springfield rifle.

Stanza 5 moves from descriptions of what Gallipoli is like to descriptions of its inhabitants. The heterogeneous nature of the city is emphasized, populated by Cypriots, Turks, Armenians, Arabs, Greeks, and “Nubian slaves” (Nubia is a region in the south of Egypt and in northern Sudan), as well as British and French soldiers. Zouaves was the name given to a French infantry corps that was first created in 1831. By 1854, there were four regiments of Zouaves, and the Crimean War was the first time they served outside Algeria.

In stanza 6, the variety of dress worn by all these nationalities that live in Gallipoli is described, from “turbans” to “fedoras,” from “pantaloons” to “knickerbockers” and “sans culottes.”

Stanza 7 describes the creation of quarters for the troops in a slaughter-house, as well as the presence of a temporary hospital and a jail. The unsanitary nature of the city is clear from the last two lines, which mention that cholera flourishes there and open sewers run down the streets.

Stanza 8 describes what people in Gallipoli eat, the standard diet being green cantaloupe “swarming with flies” and sour wine, which people consume as they listen to music played on the cithara (a stringed instrument) and the squawking of parakeets.

Stanza 9 extends the frame of reference still further, with mention of the diamond mines of Kimberley. Kimberley is a town in South Africa, famous for its diamond mines. It would appear that there are also diamond mines in the regions near Gallipoli, since the poet states that the landscape is “riddled” with them, as well as with “oubliettes of Trebizond.” Trebizond was a small Greek state that acquired an empire out of the remains of the Byzantine empire in the thirteenth century. The Trebizond empire fell in the fifteenth century, but it appears that it was known for its oubliettes. An oubliette is a concealed dungeon with a trap door at the top. It was used for people condemned to life imprisonment or those whom the authorities wished to leave to die secretly. The word comes from the French verb, oublier, which means to forget. The second part of this stanza returns to descriptions of the people who can be found in Gallipoli, including opium smokers who “doze among the Persian rugs” and spies and whores who discuss the political situation in “dim-lit snugs.”

The last stanza returns to the smells of the city, as dogs sniff for offal, and pulped plums and apricots, ready to be distilled into brandy, give off a stench. The final image, of soldiers lying dead or drunk among crushed flowers, reminds the reader of the reality of war.

But even with all these dense, rich descriptions of the city of Gallipoli, the poet/journalist concludes, in the last line, “I have not even begun to describe Gallipoli,” which suggests that no description could ever capture the full flavor of what the war correspondent Russell, in his *The British Expedition to the Crimea*, called “a wretched place . . . horribly uncomfortable.”

Varna

In eight four-line stanzas, “Varna” describes a fire that took place at the port city of Varna, Bulgaria, on the western shores of the Black Sea, on the night of August 10, 1854. The fire destroyed a quarter of the town. It broke out after French officers opened up a vat in the “spirit store” of the French commissariat. The liquid poured into the streets and a drunken Greek deliberately set fire to it. He was immediately killed by a French lieutenant. As the fire raged, there was a great commotion among the inhabitants as they tried to escape. Some prisoners were trapped in their cells. The commander of the French forces, Marshal St. Arnaud, supervised his troops well, although both British and French armies lost considerable amounts of equipment and supplies, including butter, bullets, “Lord Raglan’s portable library of books” (Lord Raglan

was the commander of the British forces), and nineteen thousand pairs of soldiers' boots.

Stanza 6 reveals that after the fire, a consignment of cavalry sabres was found in the ruins, "fused into the most fantastic shapes." The following six lines elaborate on what those shapes looked like, everything from a "crazy oriental fairground" to "gazebos, pergolas, trellises, and colonnades."

The final stanza records that the day following the fire there was an outbreak of cholera in the British fleet anchored in the bay. It spread to the town, killing thousands of people within weeks.

Dvno

During the Crimean War, British forces set up a camp in a valley near the village of Dvno, often spelled Devno. In this poem, the first four stanzas form a series of subordinate clauses, before the subject and verb of the sentence ("I thought") appears in stanza 5. In these first four stanzas, the poet (following the journalist Russell) recalls an occasion when he looked out on the beauty of the meadows with their many flowers and trees, and thought he was in the Garden of Eden, which he then illustrates in terms of "a green Irish garden / knee-deep in potato flowers."

The poem takes a turn beginning at stanza 6. After the description of the beautiful, idyllic valley, the poet reveals a darker side to the scene. At night a fog would descend, thick snakes would slither through the brush, and poisonous vapors would arise and creep up from the valleys into the tents of the men, infecting them as they slept.

In stanza 9, the speaker recalls how one day, at the sea shore, he scraped his name on the sand with a stick and laid bare the rotting face of a corpse. The following stanza tells that at night, dead bodies float in the harbor, past the ships of the British fleet. The names of some of the ships are listed. The final stanza reveals an irony. The names of the ships may be known, but the names of those killed by cholera are not, just as their bones have been scattered to whereabouts unknown.

Balaklava

Balaklava is a port city near Sevastopol in the Crimea, in the present-day nation of Ukraine. "Balaklava" begins with a description of Turkish infantry soldiers marching in columns in their dark uniforms. The Chasseurs d'Afrique, in their light blue jackets and mounted on horses also catch the eye. The Chasseurs d'Afrique were a light cavalry corps in the French Armée d'Afrique (Army of Africa), the mounted equivalent of the French Zouave infantry. The Chasseurs d'Afrique wore exactly the colorful uniforms described in the poem, which catch the eye "like a bed of flowers scattered across the valley floor."

Stanza 2 lists some of those flowers and plants, from dahlias to sage and thyme. It is April 1855, and everything is in bloom; the perfume of the flowers fills the air. But as the Turkish infantry marches, the soldiers crush some of the flowers beneath their feet.

Stanza 3 changes the emphasis from the present to the recent past. Above the green of the meadow, tall grass waves in the breeze. This grass marks the burial mounds of the soldiers who died in a battle that took place the previous fall, on October 25, 1854 (in which British forces repelled a Russian attack). The horses of the soldiers refuse to eat this grass.

As the soldiers move on, there are more signs of the battle, including the skeleton of an English horseman. The skull is clean except for two tufts of red hair. The remains of a wolfhound are at the horseman's feet. From the graves, uncovered bones can be seen, all of them without boots. There are also remains of horses. Fife and drums play as the living army sweeps over the remains of the dead soldiers.

Kertch

The narrator describes an expedition in which he and some unspecified others (probably British troops) row half a mile across the sea to a beach around which are some houses. They find French soldiers, both Zouaves and Chasseurs, with swords drawn, ransacking the houses. Windows and doors are broken, and various items, from barrels of lard to old boots, are strewn all over the place; closets are open and furniture broken. There is a stench from broken jars of fish oil and rancid butter. Hens and ducks cackle. The soldiers even put on dresses and prance around the gardens "like princesses."

In stanza 10, the scene reminds the speaker of what the ancient city of Palmyra, in Syria, must have looked like after it had been sacked by the Romans in a.d. 272. Storehouses, mansions, and palaces have been ruined and left as empty shells, and clouds of incense rise from ruined places of worship. Everything is silent except for the noise of pianos being played on by soldiers with the heels of their boots and the sound of crackling flames. The Orthodox cathedral has been destroyed, and holy artifacts set ablaze. The mosaics are smeared with excrement.

In stanza 11, the poet explains that this was the way the Russian forts were broken during the war. All kinds of supplies, from corn to guns and bullets, fell into the hands of the British and French, who spread "terror and havoc" along the otherwise peaceful seaboard. (This poem refers to a British and French expedition to Kertch in May 1855, in which Russian communications and supply lines were successfully disrupted.)

Tchernaya

Tchernaya is a river in the Crimean peninsula, and this poem, set in the spring of 1855, tells of incidents that took place in the vicinity of the Tchernaya. These were preludes to the struggle that took place for possession of Sevastopol later that year.

The poem begins by evoking the sudden coming of spring. After just a few warm days, all kinds of flowers and plants, from snowdrops to buttercups, start to spring up from the soil, and many different kinds of birds burst into song. The birds can be heard in the intervals between the sounds of the cannons firing. The flowers bloom among “piles of rusted shot” and from under “shells and heavy ordnance.” Even the huts in which the soldiers are billeted show signs of the coming of spring. Grapes sprout through the floors and the fireplace, and vines climb the walls. “Albatrosses, cranes, pelicans, and gulls” can be seen in the harbor, and “eagles, vultures, kites and hawks” can also be spotted in the region. These birds disappear for a few days at a time and then return after feeding behind the Russian lines.

The river Tchernaya is full of wildfowl, as stanza 8 explains. Some of the British officers go out at night and hunt them. This is an exciting and dangerous sport, since the Russian batteries at nearby Inkerman (the site of another great battle in the Crimean War), if their sentries were awake, would fire shells at them. During the daytime, the officers would take some French soldiers with them on these expeditions; the French, who were glad to take a break, would act as decoys.

The men also passed the time with various trivial activities. They would bet “on how many flies would fill a jar in which a dead dove lay,” and they would organize races between two- or three-legged dogs. In this way, the men amused themselves long before the actual battle took place, and each man accumulated several stories to tell.

Sedan

“Sedan” is the only poem in “The War Correspondent” that does not refer entirely to events and places in the Crimean War. Instead, Sedan was the site of a battle that took place in France, on September 2, 1870, during the Franco-Prussian War. The battle resulted in a catastrophic defeat for the French. The French emperor, Napoleon III, was taken prisoner along with a hundred thousand of his soldiers.

The poem is based on the report made by William Howard Russell of his visit to the scene immediately after the battle. He finds dead cavalry men slumped on their horses’ necks and piles of corpses of the troops. The countryside is covered with rich crops that have been trampled underfoot by the tide of battle. Apples have been “blasted from the trees” and lie around “like grape-shot.” (Grape-shot consisted of small iron balls connected together and fired from a gun.) Military equipment is lying around everywhere, including knapsacks, boots, swords, bayonets, and sabres. Dead horses are scattered around, “their legs in the air.” The dead bodies of the soldiers have been “picked over by pickpockets.” One of those pickpockets is seen carrying a load of gold watches and teeth.

There are also dismembered bodies at the scene. Hands hang from trees, and legs lie at the foot of the trees. The speaker says he will never forget the sight of one man in particular, whose head rested on a pile of apples. His eyes were open, and he seemed to be inspecting the severed head of another soldier, which lay in his lap.

The speaker then recalls the sights that greeted him as he first entered Sedan, which cause him to exclaim, “What debris a ruined empire / leaves behind it!” He explains that it was almost impossible to ride through the streets without treading on all kinds of discarded military equipment, from bayonets and sabers to shakos (a shako is a tall, cylindrical cap and was standard military dress during the nineteenth century), musketry and pikes. The sight makes the speaker think back to how Sevastopol in the Crimea was ransacked after the battle. He recalls houses and bomb shelters in chaos, with debris scattered everywhere: shattered mirrors on the floors; beds torn open; furniture, walls, and doors hacked at with swords. He recalls finding in one dug-out “a music book / with a woman’s name in it,” a canary, and a vase holding wild flowers.

Themes

A theme that runs through the seven-poem sequence is the juxtaposition of opposites: destruction caused by war and disease and the ever-renewing beauty of nature. This is first hinted at in the last stanza of “Gallipoli”; the final image to describe the reality of that city is “soldiers lie dead or drunk among the crushed flowers.” In that image, the beauty of flowering nature is overwhelmed by the folly of men, either through war or the escape from it in drunkenness. The image is echoed in “Balaklava,” one of three poems in the series that is set in spring, the time of nature’s renewal of life. The speaker first presents the soldiers marching, followed by a description of the manifold flowers that are blooming on that April day, including dahlias, anemones, wild parsley, rue, sage and thyme. The two sets of images come together in the lines, “their boots creaked / and crushed the springy flowers.” A similar image occurs in “Sedan,” in which the countryside is:

covered with rich crops
but trampled
underfoot, vines and hops
swept aside by the flood
of battle

Similar images occur also in “Tchernaya,” but in that poem, flowering nature, instead of being crushed by the onslaught of human conflict, is present within it. When spring suddenly comes, all kinds of flowers appear and the birds break out in song. But their presence cannot be separated from the reality of the war that afflicts the region:

Strange to hear them sing about the bushes
in the lulls between the thud of the bombs,
or to see between the cannon-flashes
the whole peninsula ignite with blooms.

That last image, of the area igniting with blooms, fuses the two realties (the renewal of natural life and the destruction caused by war), since flowers are not usually described as “igniting” with blooms; the word suggests rather the firing of the cannons.

The juxtaposition of opposites continues throughout the following stanza:

spring flowers bursting through the crevices
of piles of rusted shot, and peering out
from under the shells and heavy ordnance.
A geranium waved from an old boot

The image of the geranium waving from an old boot is perhaps an answer to the earlier

images in which flowers were crushed by soldiers' boots. The theme here is that nature will always spring up in new life, no matter how much destruction and death occurs in the human world. While the conflict lasts, however, it may produce some strange, even macabre reversals of the natural order of things. This can be seen in "Sedan," in which apples have been blasted prematurely from the trees by the force of the gunfire (stanza 4), and instead of apples, the speaker sees "Hands hanging in the trees / in lieu of fruit / trunkless legs at their feet." The final image of that poem, the vase of wild flowers that remains even though the bomb shelter in which it has been found has been ransacked, returns to the juxtaposition of natural beauty and war.

In "Dvno," there is a similar juxtaposition, the Eden-like environment that the speaker describes in the first five stanzas yields to a darker reality, the presence of the deadly disease cholera, a disease that is aggravated by the unsanitary conditions of war.

Throughout the sequence of poems, images of death (skulls, bones, rotting or floating corpses, both human and animal), are juxtaposed with the upsurging of new life. The eternal rhythms of nature are set against the transience of individual lives.

Style

The seven poems that make up “The War Correspondent” contain a wide variety of form and structure. In “Gallipoli,” the entire ten stanzas, each consisting of five lines, consist of a single sentence. Most of the stanzas end in semi-colons; one ends in a dash, and one with a comma; the only period comes after the last word. The most noticeable poetic device in this poem is the rhyme scheme, which operates in units of two stanzas. The stanzas do not for the most part contain end rhymes within themselves. (An end rhyme occurs at the end of a line of verse.) Instead, for example, line 1 of stanza 1 (“Billingsgate”) rhymes with line 1 of stanza 2 (“estate”), line 2 in stanza 1 (“fish”) rhymes with line 2 in stanza 2 (“dish”), and so on. Stanzas 3 and 4 follow this same structure, although there is one change: the rhyme in the last two lines is reversed, so stanza 3, line 4 (“towers”) rhymes with stanza 4, line 5 (“*Power’s*), and vice versa. Stanzas 5 and 6 follow this modified rhyme scheme also. Stanzas 7 and 8, and 9 and 10, follow broadly the same scheme, although they all include one end-rhyme within the stanza: in stanza 7, lines 2 and 3 rhyme (“sale” and “jail”), as do lines 3 and 4 in stanza 9 (“rugs” and “snugs”).

Some of the rhymes are masculine; that is, they involve a single, stressed syllable, as in the previous two examples. “Billingsgate” and “estate” (in stanzas 1 and 2) are also considered masculine rhymes, since the rhyme occurs only on the last stressed syllable. This applies also to “streets” and “parakeets,” and “troops” and “cantaloupes” in stanzas 7 and 8.

Rhymes that consist of a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable are known as feminine rhymes. An example occurs in “sailors” and “tailors” in stanzas 5 and 6. “Lingo” and “flamingo” in those stanzas also use feminine rhyme. This type of feminine rhyme is also referred to as double rhyme, since the rhyme occurs in two syllables.

In one instance, the poet rhymes words identical in spelling and sound but different in meaning. In stanza 2, “yards,” used as an unit of measurement, rhymes with “yards” (stanza 1), used in the sense of a piece of land around a house. In stanza 4, “meat” is used to rhyme with “meet.” The words are identical in sound but not in meaning or spelling. In both cases, the rhyme is classified as a “rich rhyme.”

“Varna” has shorter, four-line stanzas, with three different rhyme schemes: abba (which means that line 1 rhymes with line 4, and line 2 rhymes with line 3) in stanzas 1, 6, 7, and 8; aabb (stanzas 2 and 3); abab (stanza 4); and aabb (stanza 5).

The poet makes use of imperfect rhyme, in “troops” and “goods,” since the vowel sounds only approximate each other. The same applies to “books” and “boots” in stanza 5. The latter might qualify as an “eye-rhyme,” in which the printed words look as if they should rhyme but in fact do not. Such rhymes can vary according to different regional accents; some English speakers might pronounce the vowels in these two words in a more similar way than others.

“Dvno,” like “Kertch” and “Sedan,” makes little use of end rhyme, but “Balaklava” has a rhyme scheme similar to “Gallipoli,” operating in units of two stanzas.

In “Tchernaya,” end rhyme is used only occasionally; the poetic effect is achieved by use of alliteration at the end of the lines. That is, the consonants are repeated but the vowels do not rhyme. In stanza 3, for example, the “b” in the final word of line 1, “bushes,” is echoed by “bombs” (end of line 2), and “blooms” (end of line 4). Other examples of this technique, which can also be found frequently in “Dvno,” are “sills” and “walls” in stanza 5; “gulls” and “squalls” (stanza 6); “stopped” and “stones” (stanza 7); “decoys” and “duck” (stanza 10), and “till” and “tell” in the final stanza. The poet took some of these words directly from the prose descriptions of William Howard Russell. The following is an example from Russell’s dispatches: “The Tchernaya abounded with duck, and some of the officers had little decoys of their own.” It is the poet’s artful placement of the words at the end of the line that produces the poetic effect.

Historical Context

The Crimean War

In 1853, war broke out between an expansionist Russia and a declining Turkish empire (known as the Ottoman Empire). Russia's initial actions, including the invasion of the Baltic provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia (in present-day Romania) and the destruction of the Turkish fleet at Sinope, aroused opposition in Britain and France. Britain viewed Russian control of the eastern Mediterranean and possible expansion into Afghanistan as a threat to its interests in India. France was an ally of Turkey, and under Emperor Napoleon III (reigned as emperor, 1852–1870) was keen to show its imperial ambitions. Britain and France therefore declared war on Russia in March 1854.

British and French forces camped at Varna in Bulgaria during the spring and summer of 1854 while Turkish forces engaged the Russians a hundred miles to the north. The Russians withdrew from the Balkan provinces, and the British and French forces were ordered to invade the Crimea and take control of the Russian fortress of Sevastopol. (The region known as the Crimea is the peninsula on the Black Sea, situated in present-day Ukraine.)

The British and French allies landed in the Crimea in September 1854, about thirty miles north of Sevastopol. On September 20, they were victorious over the Russians in the battle of the Alma, about fifteen miles from Sevastopol, although they suffered heavy losses. The following month the allies began their siege of Sevastopol. The Russians tried but failed to relieve the siege at the battle of Balaklava, a small port about eight miles from Sevastopol. This was the occasion of the most famous incident of the Crimean War, the heroic but ill-advised charge of the Light Brigade, in which British cavalry charged entrenched positions of Russian artillery. Of the 673 soldiers who took part in the charge, 113 died and 134 were wounded.

On November 5, the Russians were defeated at the Battle of Inkerman. The siege of Sevastopol continued, but military action was suspended during the winter of 1854–1855. The dire conditions the troops endured during the harsh winter, with bad housing, inadequate food, and almost no proper medical care, caused an outcry in England, causing the government to fall and the new government to establish several commissions to report on and alleviate the problems.

In May 1855, as the siege of Sevastopol continued, the allies captured Kertch and Yenikale in a sea expedition. In June, the Malakoff Tower and the Redan, two forts built to defend Sevastopol, were attacked, but the Russians beat back the assault. On August 16, Russian forces attempting to come to the aid of Sevastopol were defeated by the French and Sardinians (the latter had joined the war in January 1855) in the battle of the Tchernaya. By mid-September the Russians were forced to evacuate Sevastopol. In March 1856, the Treaty of Paris was signed, officially ending the Crimean War.

Sir William Howard Russell

Pioneering war correspondent William Howard Russell was born in Lilyvale, County Dublin, Ireland, in 1820. His introduction to journalism came when he reported on Irish elections in 1841, and in 1845, when he was living in England, he was sent by the *Times* of London to report on events in Ireland. The *Times* then sent him as a special correspondent to Denmark to cover the Danes' war with Schleswig-Holstein from 1849 to 1850. On the outbreak of the Crimean War, Russell again went out as special correspondent for the *Times*. He accompanied the light division to Gallipoli in March 1854, and then he proceeded with the first detachment to Varna, where in August he witnessed the great fire that destroyed one-quarter of the city.

On the embarkation for the Crimea, Russell was attached to the British second division, which landed on September 14, 1854. "Few of those who were with the expedition will forget the night of the 14th of September," he wrote. "Seldom or never were 27,000 Englishmen more miserable." The problem was that no tents had been sent ashore, and torrential rain fell throughout the night on the troops, who had only their coats and blankets to protect them from the storm.

On September 20, Russell was present on horseback at the battle of the Alma, although riding around behind the action he was not able to see much for himself. For his reports to the *Times* he depended on the accounts given him by the soldiers and officers he questioned. He had a much better view of the battle of Balaklava on October 25 in which he witnessed the calamitous charge of the Light Brigade. His account of the charge was published in the *Times* on November 14, 1854:

They swept proudly past, glittering in the morning sun in all the pride and splendour of war. We could scarcely believe the evidence of our senses. Surely that handful of men were not going to charge an army in position? Alas! It was but too true—their desperate valour knew no bounds, and far indeed was it removed from its so-called better part—discretion.

Russell also witnessed the battle of Inkerman on November 5, 1854, which he described as "the bloodiest struggle ever witnessed since war cursed the earth. The bayonet was often the only weapon employed in conflicts of the most obstinate and deadly character."

During the winter of 1854–1855, British troops in the Crimea suffered severe privations due to bad weather, poor management, and inadequate supplies. There were no facilities to care for the wounded and not even enough linen for bandages. In his dispatches to the *Times*, Russell brought attention to the serious situation, claiming that the army had been ruined by mismanagement. Demands from the public for improvements led to the sending of Florence Nightingale (1820–1910), a nurse who was to become famous for her care of the troops, to the Crimea. Russell's critical reports were also a factor in the downfall of the British government led by prime minister Lord Aberdeen. According to Philip Knightley, in *The First Casualty*, Russell's war reporting was "considerably closer the truth than anything the public had previously

been permitted to learn, and his influence on the conduct of the Crimean campaign was immense."

In May 1855, Russell accompanied the expedition to Kertch but did not return to the Crimea until August. In September and October he described the attacks on the forts of Malakoff and Redan, and the occupation of Sevastopol.

After the Crimean War, Russell went on to cover the Indian Mutiny in 1857 (his report on it was adapted by Carson for his poem, "The Indian Mutiny" in *Breaking News*), the American Civil War, the Austro-Prussian War, the Franco-Prussian War (including the battle of Sedan), the Paris Commune, and the British expedition to quell a Zulu uprising in 1879.

Russell, who received many honors and awards, was knighted in 1895. He died in 1907.

Critical Overview

Breaking News, the collection in which “The War Correspondent” appears, received high praise from critics. Sean O’Brien in the *Times Literary Supplement*, comments that the collection, which ends with the seven poems that make up “The War Correspondent,” “concludes with the teeming plenitude of atmospheric and material detail which has marked Ciaran Carson’s work since his poetry came fully to life in the 1980s.” O’Brien goes on to describe “The War Correspondent” as “a rich and remarkable piece of work. . . . the poems never read as antiquarian works of reconstruction.” He singles out “Gallipoli” for particular comment, describing it as a characteristic Carson poem, “its thousand details all somehow got on board the poem’s sixty-line sentence, only for the poet-correspondent to declare: ‘I have not even begun to describe Gallipoli.’” O’Brien describes this last statement as a “boast, an admission of failure and a profession of faith . . . [it] means that the world, however terrible, is inexhaustible.”

In another favorable review, David Gardiner, in *Irish Literary Supplement*, comments that “Every poem within *Breaking News* addresses or alludes to political conflict and its results.” He comments in particular on the final images in “Sedan,”—the music-book, the canary, and the vase of wild flowers—seeing them as characterizing the poet’s “entire effort.” He explains as follows: “Carson presents the poet as effete looter, taking part in none of the barbarity but trying to preserve it for later generations while looking for beauty for himself.”

John Taylor, in the *Antioch Review*, describes “The War Correspondent” as a “richly detailed long poem.” He contrasts this with the shorter poems elsewhere in *Breaking News* which are so “stripped of rhetoric . . . they resemble mere on-the-scene jottings.”

When *Breaking News* was awarded the Forward Prize, the largest poetry award in the United Kingdom, the chairman of the judges, Sir Peter Stothard, said Carson had written “powerfully about war and politics—taut, truthful poems” (quoted in the *Guardian*).

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1

Critical Essay #1

Aubrey holds a Ph.D. in English and has published many articles on poetry. In this essay, he discusses the war reporting of Sir William Howard Russell and the use Carson made of it in "The War Correspondent."

Ciaran Carson's "The War Correspondent" is a tribute to the war reporting of Sir William Howard Russell, whose words written in the mid-nineteenth century come to new life in the work of the Irish poet. Reading Russell's vivid, richly descriptive dispatches from the Crimean War, it is not difficult to see why they have exerted such an influence on the poet, who dedicates the entire volume, *Breaking News*, in which "The War Correspondent" appears, to Russell. Russell was an Irishman in the days before Irish independence; Carson is an Irish poet from a region of Ireland that remains part of the United Kingdom, who lived through thirty years of sectarian violence that turned his home city of Belfast into a virtual war zone. In *Breaking News*, Carson becomes a kind of war reporter himself, recording the sights and sounds of Belfast in the years following the uneasy peace settlement of 1998, during which tension and fear still pervade the air, British Army helicopters still fly overhead, and the memory of sudden, deadly violence remains clear. Carson also links the present-day reality of Belfast with the wars that have gone before it, including the Crimean War, an imperial war the traces of which can still be seen in the early 2000s in Belfast in the commemorative names of the streets: Sevastopol, Crimea, Inkerman. As Carson writes in "Exile":

The poet Carson, however, had little interest in Russell's patriotism or his accounts of the suffering of the wounded. What most caught his eye was the journalist's keen observation, his eye for detail, his gift for the telling image.Belfast
is many
places then
as now

The work of Russell marked the beginning of a new era in war reporting, through which the educated public became more fully informed about current wars than ever before. Although some of Russell's dispatches took nearly three weeks to reach London and get printed in the *Times*—by contrast to instant satellite communications that enable war correspondents in the early 2000s to be heard and seen live by millions of television viewers—in their accuracy and detail they represented considerable progress over former times. Only sixty years earlier, news of a great English naval victory over the French was conveyed by courier to the British Admiralty, and no less a personage than the Duke of Clarence went personally to the theater at Covent Garden and told the manager to announce the news to the audience. It was common during the French Revolutionary wars and the Napoleonic wars to make such announcements in streets and theaters. Newspapers were not the sources of such information; without reporters

on the spot, they were dependent on the government, which controlled the channels of communication, to tell them what had happened.

In the Crimean War, the first major war in Europe since the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815, the dry official dispatches that purported to describe events at the battlefront were eclipsed by the rise of a new type of newspaper reporter, the special correspondent, the greatest of whom was Russell. Russell's reports not only informed the public about the nature and outcome of key battles but also exposed the mismanagement that led to the extreme hardships suffered by British troops in the severe winter of 1854–1855. Working for the *Times* enhanced Russell's influence, since in the early 1850s it had a circulation of forty thousand, greater than that of all its rivals put together.

Russell's reports give the reader plenty of insight into the brutality of war and the suffering it inflicts. His descriptions of the aftermath of battles are particularly memorable, although they do not make for comfortable reading. After the fall of Sevastopol, Russell entered a hospital to which Russian casualties had been taken. He described what he saw as "the most heartrending and revolting" example of the horrors of war that had ever been presented. Here is part of his description of the wounded Russians:

Many lay, yet alive, with maggots crawling about in their wounds. Many, nearly mad by the scene around them, or seeking escape from it in their extremest agony, had rolled away under the beds and glared out on the heart-stricken spectator. Many, with legs and arms broken and twisted, the jagged splinters sticking through the raw flesh, implored aid, water, food or pity, or, deprived of speech by the approach of death or by dreadful injuries in the head or trunk, pointed to the lethal spot.

Although Russell's horror at sights such as these is entirely genuine, he also had a belief, in keeping with the age in which he lived, in the glory of war. He had his fair share of patriotic fervor regarding the "sublime efforts" of his countrymen in the "great struggle" that was the Crimean War (these words are from a preface he wrote when his account of the war was published as *The British Expedition to the Crimea*). In this respect, his writing is clearly from another era, as in this stirring account of a moment in the battle of the Alma, which reads almost as if it is from a comic strip designed to inculcate patriotic pride in British schoolboys:

Sir George Brown . . . rode in front of his Light Division, urging them with voice and gesture. Gallant fellows! they were worthy of such a gallant chief. . . . Down went Sir George in a cloud of dust in front of the battery. He was soon up and shouted, "23rd, I'm all right. Be sure I'll remember this day," and led them on again.

The poet Carson, however, had little interest in Russell's patriotism or his accounts of the suffering of the wounded. What most caught his eye was the journalist's keen observation, his eye for detail, his gift for the telling image. In "Gallipoli," for example, the first four stanzas, which consist in effect of a series of similes that create a picture of what the city looks like, spring directly from Russell's description of Gallipoli, written

when he arrived there with British forces in early April 1854. Russell's first sentence begins "Take the most dilapidated outhouses of farmers' yards in England," which Carson adopts almost word for word in line 3 of stanza 1: "the tumbledown outhouses of English farmers' yards." The very first line of the poem is also taken directly from Russell's "carry off sheds and stalls from Billingsgate," which becomes "Take sheds and stalls from Billingsgate" in "Gallipoli." Russell's "borrow a dirty gutter from a back street in Boulogne—let the houses in parts lean across to each other so that the tiles meet" becomes "take a dirty gutter from a back street in Boulogne, / where shops and houses teeter so their pitched roofs meet" in stanza 3 of the poem.

Sometimes, the poet makes changes in Russell's account simply to create a rhyme. In stanza 3 of "Varna," for example, the French soldier who kills the man who started the fire is a "lieutenant," whereas in Russell's account he is identified only as an "officer." Carson makes the change so he can create at least a partial rhyme between "lieutenant" and "inhabitants" in the next line. In stanza 1, he takes Russell's phrase "fanned the flames as they leapt along the wooden streets" and writes, "fanned the flames along the tumbledown / wooden streets." The poet needed to add "tumbledown" in order to create a rhyme with "town" in the previous line. Similarly, Russell's "casks of spirits" becomes "the main vat" in order to create a rhyme with "commissariat" in the previous line. The "yells of the Turks" become "the yells / of prisoners trapped in their cells," which has the advantage not only of creating a more vivid image but also of providing the necessary rhyme. In stanza 6, Russell's description of the cavalry sabres "fused into the most fantastic shapes" as a result of the fire stimulates the poet to his inventive similes, in which the sabres are "looking like an opium-smoker's cityscape / or a crazy oriental fairground."

The final images in "Sedan," the last poem of "The War Correspondent" are among the most striking of all the images in these poems. Carson has plucked them almost verbatim from Russell's description of the scene he encountered at the site of the Redan fort after it had fallen to the British. Referring to bomb shelters, Russell wrote, "in one of them a music-book was found with a woman's name in it, and a canary bird and vase of flowers were outside the entrance." The only changes Carson makes, other than placing the line breaks appropriately to fit the form of the poem, is to put the journalist's discovery in the active voice ("I found") rather than the passive "was found," to add the adjective "wild" to describe the flowers, and to omit "outside the entrance," so as to create a more compact image of these items all being found in the bomb shelter. Thus does Carson fuse the prose of war reportage with the stuff of poetry to convey the irony of natural beauty and human culture found in the midst of wholesale, man-made destruction.

Source: Bryan Aubrey, Critical Essay on "The War Correspondent," in *Poetry for Students*, Thomson Gale, 2007.

Topics for Further Study

• Research the Charge of the Light Brigade and make a class presentation explaining what happened and why. Why was the order to charge given? What did the Light Brigade do? Was the charge a classic military blunder or did it accomplish something?

• Read “The Indian Mutiny,” by Carson, in *Breaking News*. Like “The War Correspondent,” it is based on a report by William Howard Russell. Research and describe the historical event that gave rise to the poem. Does “The Indian Mutiny” resemble any of the poems that make up “The War Correspondent?” How are the themes similar? Write an essay in which you explain your findings.

• Take any newspaper or magazine article that describes conditions in Baghdad, Iraq, or Kabul, Afghanistan, or any other place in the world where there is a current or recent conflict. Following Carson’s example in “The War Correspondent,” write a poem based on the article.

• Write an essay in which you discuss how war reporting has changed from the Crimean War to World War II, the Vietnam War, and the war in Iraq that began in 2003. Examine relations between governments and the press during these wars. Has the press been subject to censorship? Is censorship in war necessary or should the press have complete freedom? How does war reporting by press and television affect government decisions made in times of war?

What Do I Read Next?

- Carson's *Selected Poems* (2001) is a representative selection of Carson's poetry taken from each of his seven books up to *The Twelfth of Never* (1998). The selection shows how Carson's poetry has progressed and changed over the years.

- *The Oxford Book of War Poetry*, edited by Jon Stallworthy (new edition, 2003), contains 250 poems from all ages, including Homer's *Iliad*, poems of World War I and World War II, the Vietnam War, and the later conflicts in Northern Ireland and El Salvador. Poets represented include Lord Byron, Thomas Hardy, Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, and Seamus Heaney.

- Leo Tolstoy's *Sebastopol Sketches* contains three sketches by the great Russian writer who served in the Russian army during the Crimean War. The sketches give vivid insight into the lives of the ordinary Russian soldiers, and Tolstoy tells his story with a concern for truth and for his own feelings rather than what the authorities expect him to say. Some parts of the sketches were at the time subjected to censorship by the Russian authorities. The sketches are available in a Penguin Classics edition published in 1986.

- "The Charge of the Light Brigade," a poem by Alfred, Lord Tennyson, famously records the disastrous charge of the British Light Brigade during the Crimean War. Tennyson was inspired to write the poem after reading the description by William Howard Russell of the courageous but ill-fated charge. The poem is available in Tennyson's *Selected Poems*, published in 2003 by Phoenix Press.

Further Study

Crotty, Patrick, *Modern Irish Poetry: An Anthology*, Blackstaff Press, 1995.

This anthology of Irish poetry includes selections from the work of established poets such as Seamus Heaney, Eavan Boland, Derek Mahon, Michael Longley, and Paul Muldoon, as well as some new and less well-known voices.

Lewis, Jon E., ed. *Mammoth Book of War Correspondents*, Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2001.

This book highlights 150 years of war reportage in the reporters' own words, beginning with Russell's coverage of the Crimean War and concluding with the 1990s conflicts in Bosnia and Chechnya. The one hundred pieces of war correspondence, which are arranged chronologically, include work by Stephen Crane, Rudyard Kipling, Ernest Hemingway, George Orwell, Edward R. Murrow, Seymour Hersh, Peter Arnett, and Ernie Pyle.

Royle, Trevor, *Crimea: The Great Crimean War, 1854–1856*, Palgrave Macmillan, reprint edition, 2004.

Royle is an expert on military history, and this book is widely considered the definitive work on the Crimean War. It describes in detail the causes of the war, the military action and diplomatic maneuvering, and the long-term consequences.

Warner, Philip, *The Crimean War: A Reappraisal*, Taplinger Publishing, 1973.

Warner provides a fresh examination of the Crimean War, suggesting that the traditional view, that the war was a classic model of military and medical incompetence, may not be the complete truth.

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Knightley, Phillip, *The First Casualty: From the Crimea to Vietnam: The War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist, and Myth Maker*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975, p. 5.

Mathews, Joseph J., *Reporting the Wars*, University of Minnesota Press, 1957, p. 71.

O’Brien, Sean, “Belfast and Beyond,” in *Times Literary Supplement*, No. 5228, June 13, 2003, p. 10.

Russell, William Howard, *The British Expedition to the Crimea*, New and Revised Edition, George Routledge and Sons, 1877, p. v.

———, *Russell’s Despatches from the Crimea, 1854–1856*, edited by Nicolas Bentley, Hill and Wang, 1966, pp. 28, 29, 30, 54, 67, 88, 127, 132, 176, 263, 264, 265.

Taylor, John, Review of *Breaking News*, in *Antioch Review*, Vol. 62, No. 2, Spring 2004, p. 372.

BOOKRAGS

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Project Editor
David Galens

Editorial
Sara Constantakis, Elizabeth A. Cranston, Kristen A. Dorsch, Anne Marie Hacht, Madeline S. Harris, Arlene Johnson, Michelle Kazensky, Ira Mark Milne, Polly Rapp, Pam Revitzer, Mary Ruby, Kathy Sauer, Jennifer Smith, Daniel Toronto, Carol Ullmann

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Product Design
Michelle DiMercurio, Pamela A. E. Galbreath, Michael Logusz

Manufacturing
Stacy Melson

For more information, contact
The Gale Group, Inc
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48334-3535
Or you can visit our Internet site at
http://www.gale.com

Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Poetry for Students (PfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's"For Students" Literature line, PfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on "classic" novels frequently

studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of PfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of PfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of "classic" novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members—educational professionals— helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in PfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed—for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man–the character is listed as "The Narrator" and alphabetized as "Narrator." If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. • Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name "Jean Louise Finch" would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname "Scout Finch."
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by PfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an “at-a-glance” comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author’s time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

PfS includes “The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,” a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children’s Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Poetry for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the PfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the PfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Poetry for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Poetry for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from PfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

"Night." Poetry for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234–35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from PfS (usually the first piece under the "Criticism" subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on "Winesburg, Ohio." Poetry for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335–39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of PfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. "Margaret Atwood's "The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition," Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9–16; excerpted and reprinted in Poetry for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133–36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of PfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. "Richard Wright: "Wearing the Mask," in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69–83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59–61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Poetry for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

Editor, Poetry for Students
Gale Group
27500 Drake Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48331–3535