

## For the Fallen

With proud thanksgiving,  
a mother for her children  
England mourns for her dead across the sea,  
Flesh of her flesh they were,  
spirit of her spirit,  
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill:  
Death august and royal  
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres,  
There is music in the midst of desolation  
And glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle,  
they were young,  
Straight of limb, true of eyes,  
steady and aglow,  
They were staunch to the end  
against odds uncounted,  
They fell with their faces to the foe.

**They shall grow not old,  
as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them,  
nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun  
and in the morning,  
We will remember them.**

They mingle not  
with their laughing comrades again,  
They sit no more at familiar tables of home,  
They have no lot in our labour of the daytime,  
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires and hopes profound,  
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,  
To the innermost heart  
of their own land they are known  
As the stars are known to the night.

As the stars shall be bright when we are dust,  
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,  
As the stars that are starry  
in the time of our darkness,  
To the end, to the end, they remain.



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## The Ode

**The Ode comes from 'For the Fallen', a poem by the English poet and writer Laurence Binyon and was published in London in the Winoing Fan; Poems of the Great War in 1914. The verse, which became the League Ode was already used in association with commemoration services in Australia in 1921.**

The Ode used is the fourth stanza of the poem 'For the Fallen' was written in the early days of the First World War. By mid September 1914, less than seven weeks after the outbreak of war, the British Expeditionary Force in France had already suffered severe casualties. Long lists of the dead and wounded appeared in British newspapers. It was against this background the Binyon wrote 'For the Fallen'.

Each year after Anzac Day and Remembrance Day debate rises on the word 'condemn' or 'contemn'. The poem was first published in The Times on 21 September 1914 using the word 'condemn'. Some people have suggested that the use of 'condemn' in The Times was a typographical error. However, The Winoing Fan, published a month or two later and for which Binyon would have had galley proofs on which to mark amendments, 'condemn' was again used.

Binyon was a highly educated man and very precise in his use of words. There is no doubt that had he intended 'contemn', then it would have been used.

Dr John Hatcher, who in 1955 published a biography of Binyon, does not refer to any doubt over condemn/contemn, despite devoting a solid chapter to 'For the Fallen'.

The British Society of Authors, executors of the Binyon estate, says the word is definitely 'condemn', while the British Museum where Binyon worked, says its memorial stone also shows 'condemn'. Both expressed surprise when told there had been some debate about the matter in Australia. The condemn/contemn issue seems to be a distinctly Australian phenomenon. Inquiries with the British, Canadian and American Legions revealed that none had heard of the debate.

'Contemn' is not used in Binyon's published anthologies and the two volumes set Collected Poems, regarded as the definitive version of Binyon's poems, uses 'condemn'. The RSL handbook shows 'condemn' and a representative of the Australian War Memorial said it always used 'condemn' in its ceremonies.