

5 a day quiz – write down the poetic technique  
being described in each definition

1. A line of poetry which runs onto the next line with no punctuation at the end.
2. Repetition of harsh 'p' or 'b' sounds.
3. Writing using the narrative voice of an individual using the word 'I'.
4. Language or ideas used to provoke emotions
5. A section of a poem, like paragraph.

5 a day quiz – write down the poetic technique  
being described in each definition

1. A line of poetry which runs onto the next line with no punctuation at the end. **Enjambment**
2. Repetition of harsh 'p' or 'b' sounds. **Plosives**
3. Writing using the narrative voice of an individual using the word 'I'. **First person**
4. Language or ideas used to provoke emotions. **Emotive**
5. A section of a poem, like paragraph. **Stanza**

# Mind map ideas about the title in your books

What is the definition of the word 'remains'?

How can the title be seen as ambiguous?

**Remains**

Our poetry cluster is '*Power and Conflict*'. How can you link the title of this poem to those themes?

What other ideas does the title bring to mind?

# The Not Dead, By Simon Armitage

*Reviewed by Tom Boncza-Tomaszewski Sunday 23 November 2008*

Originally broadcast a year ago in a Channel 4 documentary of the same name, *The Not Dead* is a short collection of war poems written, not in battle, but as a response to the testimonies of ex-soldiers featured in the programme. As Simon Armitage points out in his eloquent, self-effacing introduction, time is no "great healer" for people scarred by war. One of the former soldiers in the documentary is still unable to talk without crying about a jungle ambush he took part in nearly 50 years previously in Malaya.

Each poem focuses on a flashback scene one of the ex-soldiers has struggled to forget. "Remains", for example, written for someone who served in Basra, tries to capture the moment when he shot a man looting a bank. The body was disposed of but the man's "blood shadow" remained on the street: "I blink / and he bursts again through the doors of the bank. / Sleep, and he's probably armed, possibly not."

Who are the Not Dead? The ex-servicemen and the ghosts trapped in their memories; the people who live and die and live again every time one of the veterans experiences a bad memory. This collection offers a strange, painful kind of memorial.

This article from *The Independent*, explains that the collection of poetry is based on soldiers' first person accounts of war.

Does this help us think of other ideas about what the title might mean?

# 'THE NOT DEAD' – GUARDSMAN TROMANS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2DHWqppktFo>

You are about to watch a clip from Armitage's documentary *The Not Dead*. In this clip, you will see meet Guardsman Tromans; the soldier whose experience inspired Armitage's poem *Remains*.

As you watch, think carefully about how conflict has affected him.

What sort of emotions do you think the poem *Remains* will explore as a consequence?

***"These are poems of survivors – the damaged, exhausted men who return from war in body but never, wholly, in mind."*** – Simon Armitage

# Understanding the poem – how to annotate

Make notes around your poem in answer to the questions below:

- Who is talking in the poem?
- Why did Armitage use the **first person** perspective to tell the story?
- Why is it written as a **monologue**?
- What do you notice with the structure or is there anything interesting you notice about the **stanzas**?

Challenge: Do you notice anything about the sounds in the poem?  
How do you think Armitage wants us to feel when we read this poem? Why?

## 5 a day quiz – answer the questions below

1. Who tells the story in the poem Remains?
2. Which narrative perspective is used in the poem Remains: First, second or third person?
3. What event is being described in the poem?
4. What is the name given to a section of a poem, like a paragraph?
5. Who wrote the poem Remains?

## 5 a day quiz – answer the questions below

1. Who tells the story in the poem Remains? **A soldier**
2. Which narrative perspective is used in the poem Remains: First, second or third person? **First (I)**
3. What event is being described in the poem? **A soldier shooting and killing a looter**
4. What is the name given to a section of a poem, like a paragraph? **Stanza**
5. Who wrote the poem Remains? **Simon Armitage**



# Understanding the soldier's feelings

**Read the article about PTSD and answer the questions in your books.**

Be prepared to share your ideas.

Consider why Armitage wrote the poem.

What might he have wanted us to think or feel?

What was his message?

# Annotating the poem further

What does the first line suggest? Why start with this sentence?

**On another occasion, we got sent out to tackle looters raiding a bank.  
And one of them legs it up the road, probably armed, possibly not.**

How many soldiers are involved in this event? Which pronoun is used to show this and who tells them to do it? What is the effect?

Why use words like 'probably' and 'possibly'? How does it enhance the reader's understanding of the situation?

Identify colloquial language used. How does that add to the informal and personal tone?

Annotating prompt questions: continue to annotate the rest of the poem with your partner.

- How are the bullets described?
- How does the colloquial language help to trivialise the event? Why would he do this?
- What do you notice about the structure?
- What is significant about line 17?
- What sounds do you notice? What could it represent?
- What does line 26 make it sound like?
- What is the significance of the last line?

Choose a statement to discuss and be prepared to share your ideas:

*'The poem is an unrealistic portrayal of what life as a soldier would have been like. It presents it all as negative.'*

- How far do you agree?

*'This soldier should be put in prison because it sounds like he killed someone he shouldn't have.'*

- How far do you agree?