Practice in-class essay:

Compare the two war poems,  “Anthem for Doomed Youth” (1920) by Wilfred Owen and “next to of course god america i” (1926) by e.e. cummings:

**Wilfred Owen, "Anthem for Doomed Youth" (1920)**

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?

      Only the monstrous anger of the guns.

      Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle

Can patter out their hasty orisons.

No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells,

      Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—

The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;

      And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?

      Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes

Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-byes.

      The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;

Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,

And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

**e.e. cummings "next to of course god america I" (1926)**

"next to of course god america i love you land of the pilgrims' and so forth oh say can you see by the dawn's early my country 'tis of centuries come and go and are no more what of it we should worry in every language even deafanddumb thy sons acclaim your glorious name by gorry by jingo by gee by gosh by gum why talk of beauty what could be more beaut- iful than these heroic happy dead who rushed like lions to the roaring slaughter they did not stop to think they died instead then shall the voice of liberty be mute?"

He spoke. And drank rapidly a glass of water

Write an essay comparing the two, showing how the different techniques each poet uses create a similar message.

Use these questions as study guides (**you will not use all your points in the essay**, but they will help you understand the poems):

Can they both be deemed anti-war poems?

What do the titles suggest?

What is the specific theme of each poem?

What poetic form is used for each poem?  how does that affect our reading?

What poetic techniques are used in each to create the theme?

Which poem is more powerful?  why?

How are the poems similar?  how are they different?

Does it matter that Owen was English and cummings American?

Consider what thesis you will argue and which lines and details you might use to argue your case.