



John E. Stewart was a poet and teacher from Coatbridge. He served with the Border Regiment during the First World War and was awarded the Military Cross for bravery in 1916. He was killed in action in April 1918.

You can find out more about John Stewart by downloading the leaflet *In Fierce Light*. Read the poem below and answer the questions underneath.

Courage

I was afraid of Fear,
Not of the foe;
And when I thought that those I hold most dear
My craven soul would know
And turn away ashamed, who praised before,
Ashamed and deep distressed to find it so,
I was afraid the more.

Lo, when I joined the fight,
And bared my breast
To all the darts of that wild hellish night,
I, only, stood the test,
For Fear, which I had feared, deserted then,
And forward blithely at the foe I prest
King of myself again.

1. John called the poem '*Courage*' but can you think of another title which would suit the poem?
2. Highlight, or underline, the rhymes. Can you describe the rhyme scheme using rhyme scheme notation?
3. What do we learn about John Stewart from reading this poem?
4. What can we learn about the First World War from reading this poem?

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