All *day, day* after *day*, *they're bringing them home*, *they're* picking *them* up, those *they* can find and bringing *them* home, *they're* bringing *them* in, piled on the hulls of Grants, in trucks in convoys, *they're* zipping *them* up in green plastic bags, *they're* tagging *them* now in Saigon, in the mortuary coolness *they're* giving *them* names, *they're* rolling *them* out of the deep-freeze lockers - on the tarmac at Tan Son Nhut the noble jets are *whining like hounds*, *they are bringing them home* - curly-heads, kinky-hairs, crew-cuts, balding *non-coms* - *they're high*, now, *high* and *higher*, over the land, the steaming *chow mein*, their shadows are tracing the blue curve of the Pacific with sorrowful quick fingers, heading south, heading east, *home, home, home* - and the coasts swing upward, the old ridiculous curvatures*

*(one single verse that continues on the next page)*

**Word choice of “they”, “they’re” and “them” implies an anonymous mass, hence emphasizing the sheer number of the dead.**

**STEP 1: SUBJECT MATTER:** This poem discusses the returning of dead servicemen to their home countries during the Vietnam War.

**STEP 2 & 3: KEY IDEA/TONE & MOOD**

- The poet wants to communicate his despair at the number of dead;
- Hence giving the poem a melancholic mood.

**STEP 4: TECHNIQUES**

Through repetition of “they’re”, “them” and “they are bringing them home”, Dawe is able to emphasize the sheer numbers of soldiers that have been killed.

Specific Vietnam War details add authenticity.

Personification of shadows highlight the sadness and grief for those dead.
of earth, the knuckled hills, the mangrove-swamps, the desert emptiness...

In their sterile housing they tilt towards those like skiers
- taxiing in, on the long runways, **the howl of their homecoming rises**
surrounding them like their last moments *(the mash, the splendour)*
then fading at length as they move
on to small towns where dogs in the frozen sunset
raise muzzles in mute salute,
and on to cities in whose wide web of suburbs
**telegrams tremble like leaves from a wintering tree**
and **the spider grief swings in his bitter geometry**

- they're **bringing them home**, now, too late, too early.

**Use of figurative language** *("the howl")* to describe the dog-like noises the transport aircraft makes as it leaves the runway.

**Strong imagery is employed.**
Simile likening telegrams to dead leaves and grief metaphorically referred to as a “spider” spinning its web inwards.

**STEP 5: SYNTHESIS**
Dawe is critical of a war, where so many are killed that they are impossible to name. His repetitive use of the non-specific pronoun “they” and its variations, emphasizes the immense number of dead.