

In Flanders Fields

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders Fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders Fields.

By Major John McCrae

Notes

In Flanders Fields is one of the most famous poems written during the First World War, and has been called "the most popular poem" produced during that period.[1] It is written in the form of a French rondeau. Canadian Physician, Soldier and Poet, Major (soon to be Lieutenant Colonel) John McCrae wrote it on May 3, 1915, after he witnessed the death of his friend, Lieutenant Alexis Helmer, the day before. The poem was first published on December 8, that year in Punch magazine.

On January 28, 1918, while commanding No 3 Canadian General Hospital (McGill) at Boulogne, McCrae died of pneumonia. He was buried with full honours in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission section of Wimereux Cemetery, just a couple of kilometres up the coast from Boulogne. McCrae's horse, "Bonfire", led the procession, his master's riding boots reversed in the stirrups. McCrae's gravestone is placed flat, as are all the others, because of the sandy soil.

The **In Flanders Fields** poem has achieved near-mythic status in contemporary Canada and is one of the nation's most prominent symbols. Most Remembrance Day ceremonies will feature a reading of the poem in some form (it is also sung a cappella in some places), and many Canadian schoolchildren memorize the verse. This is also true of the United Kingdom, where the poem holds as one of the nation's best loved.