

In Flanders Fields

This poem was written during the First World War by Canadian physician Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae. He was inspired to write it on May 3, 1915, after presiding over the funeral of friend and fellow soldier Lieutenant Alexis Helmer, who died in the Second Battle of Ypres.¹ At that time he noted how poppies quickly grew around the graves of those who died in the battle.² According to legend, fellow soldiers retrieved the poem after McCrae, initially dissatisfied with his work, discarded it. *In Flanders Fields* was first published on December 8 of that year in the London magazine *Punch*.³

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.

¹ Wikipedia, *In Flanders Field*, Introduction

² Gillmor, Don (2001), *Canada: A People's History*, p. 93

³ Wikipedia, *In Flanders Field*, Introduction