



REMEMBRANCE DAY

November 11th, 2009

The poem "In Flanders Fields" was written after John McCrae witnessed the death, and presided over the funeral, of a friend, Lt. Alexis Helmer. By most accounts it was written in his notebook and later rejected by McCrae. Ripped out of his notebook, it was rescued by a fellow officer, Francis Alexander Scrimger, and later published in Punch magazine.

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.

— Lt.-Col. John McCrae (1872 - 1918)

The 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. A portion of the poem is now printed on Canadian \$10 notes, where it spawned a rumour that the poem had been misprinted, resulting from popular confusion between the first line's "blow" and the penultimate line's "grow." The use of "grow" in the first line is, however, an authentic variation.



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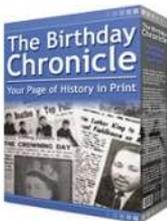
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