

In Flanders Fields

This poem, one of the most memorable war poems ever written, was scribbled in twenty minutes in the back of an ambulance parked at a field dressing station by Major John McCrae , a Canadian surgeon, after burying his comrade and former medical student, who was killed by a shell burst on May 2, 1915.

From where he sat, McCrae could see the wild poppies that sprang up in the ditches in that part of Europe.

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.

— John McCrae