

Veterans Day Poems

In Flanders Fields

By John McCrae

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.



Anthem for Doomed Youth

By Wilfred Owen

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries for them; no prayers nor bells,
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,-
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.



What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

1914

By Wilfred Owen

War broke: and now the Winter of the world
With perishing great darkness closes in.
The foul tornado, centered at Berlin,
Is over all the width of Europe whirled,
Rending the sails of progress. Rent or furled
Are all Art's ensigns. Verse wails. Now begin
Famines of thought and feeling. Love's wine's thin.
The grain of human Autumn rots, down-hurled.

For after Spring had bloomed in early Greece, And
Summer blazed her glory out with Rome, An
Autumn softly fell, a harvest home,
A slow grand age, and rich with all increase.
But now, for us, wild Winter, and the need
Of sowings for new Spring, and blood for seed.



To the United States of America

By Robert Bridges

BROTHERS in blood! They who this wrong began To wreck our commonwealth,
will rue the day When first they challenged freemen to the fray, And with the
Briton dared the American.

Now we are pledged to win the Rights of man;
Labor and Justice now shall have their way,
And in a League of Peace—God grant we may—
Transform the earth, not patch up the old plan.

Sure is our hope since he who led your nation
Spake for mankind, and ye arose in awe
Of that high call to work the world's salvation;
Clearing your minds of all estranging blindness
In the vision of Beauty and the Spirit's law,
Freedom and Honor and sweet Loving kindness.

Soldier's Dream

By Wilfred Owen

I dreamed kind Jesus fouled the big-gun gears;
And caused a permanent stoppage in all bolts;
And buckled with a smile Mausers and Colts;
And rusted every bayonet with His tears.



And there were no more bombs, of ours or Theirs,
Not even an old flint-lock, not even a pikel.
But God was vexed, and gave all power to Michael;
And when I woke he'd seen to our repairs.

The New Ally

By Harry Kem

THEIR great grey ships go plunging forth;
The waves, wind-wakened from the north,
Swarm up their bows and fall away,
And wash the air with golden spray.

Far off is flung their battle-line;
Far off their great guns flame and shine;
And we are one with them—we rise
With dawning thunder in our eyes
To join the embattled hosts that kept
Their pact with freedom while we slept!

The Choice

1917

(The American Spirit)

By Rudyard Kipling

TO the judge of Right and Wrong
With Whom fulfilment lies
Our purpose and our power belong,
Our faith and sacrifice.

Let Freedom's Land rejoice!
Our ancient bonds are riven;
Once more to us the eternal choice
Of Good or Ill is given.

Not at a little cost,
Hardly by prayers or tears,
Shall we recover the road we lost
In the drugged and doubting years.

But after the fires and the wrath,
But, after searching and pain,
His Mercy opens us a path
To live with ourselves again.

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In the Gates of Death rejoice!
We see and hold the good—
Bear witness, Earth, we have made our choice
With Freedom's brotherhood!

Then praise the Lord Most High
Whose Strength hath saved us whole,
Who bade us choose that the Flesh should die
And not the living Soul!

To the God in man displayed—
Where e'er we see that Birth,
Be love and understanding paid
As never yet on earth!

To the Spirit that moves in Man,
On Whom all worlds depend,
Be Glory since our world began
And service to the end!

WARS

By Carl Sandburg

IN the old wars drum of hoofs and the beat of shod feet. In
the new wars hum of motors and the tread of rubber tires.
In the wars to come silent wheels and whirr of rods not yet
dreamed out in the heads of men.

In the old wars clutches of short swords and jabs into
faces with spears.
In the new wars long range guns and smashed walls, guns
running a spit of metal and men falling in tens and
twenties.
In the wars to come new silent deaths, new silent hurlers
not yet dreamed out in the heads of men.

In the old wars kings quarreling and thousands of men
following.

In the new wars kings quarreling and millions of men
following.

In the wars to come kings kicked under the dust and
millions of men following great causes not yet
dreamed out in the heads of men.