



In Flanders Fields

Linda Granfield

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This tribute to the famous World War I poem, "In Flanders Fields", is at once affecting and informative. Author Linda Granfield has interwoven John McCrae's words with fascinating information about the war, details of daily life in the trenches, accounts of McCrae's experiences in his field hospital, and a description of the tragic circumstances that led him to write the poem.

In Flanders Fields Details

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From Reader Review In Flanders Fields for online ebook

Ed Campodonico says

This is a great story to tell, but the format of the book is not very good. There are no page numbers, and the line lengths of paragraph text runs 15-20 words. Very hard for beginning readers.

Melissa Barbier says

This is a touching book about the poem titled "In Flanders Field" which is about the soldiers buried in Flanders Field who died in World War I. I had not heard of this poem before, but the book includes the poem in the beginning, and then goes through the poem a couple lines at a time with beautiful paintings to go along with the lines. After each couple of lines, there is background about what happened in the war, when the U.S. entered the war, and other details that help explain what the poem is trying to say. It is a beautiful book for many ages. It could be a great read aloud for second grade and up. This would be a great way to celebrate Veteran's Day with students. It would also serve as a great book to introduce poetry since there are explanations for what each line means.

Jim says

Like thousands of other readers, I first read this poem in high school. More recently, the title and cover of this book caught my eye as I was browsing at my local library. It contains interesting background information, particularly about the author, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, who was a field surgeon on the front lines. He wrote this poem shortly after the death of a friend and fellow soldier who died in the horrific Second Battle of Ypres. Near the end of the war, McCrae contracted pneumonia and died shortly thereafter. Fine illustrations add to the poignancy of this little book.

Ebookwormy1 says

Part ode to great literature, part biography of John McCrae, and part World War 1 primer, Linda Granfield's "In Flanders Fields" sets out to weave together several stories into one. Pages full of text are alternated with full page illustrations that feature lines of John McCrae's famous poem at the bottom.

The book opens with a moving and insightful introduction by Canadian War Museum historian, Tim Cook, followed by a handwritten illustration of "In Flander's Fields" which is decipherable, but not entirely clear.

Page 1 is block text, with pages 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 featuring the poem lines only with illustration. This back and forth style continues throughout the book and is thoroughly distracting. I would have preferred the illustrated content of the poem in it's entirety either before or after the narrative. While these vibrant illustrations are engaging for younger students, the block text pages, even though broken by period drawings, advertisements and photographs, are a bit too cumbersome.

The narrative is well done, giving us a feel for McCrae and the war. McCrae's death is also covered. The only time it falters is when trying to make sense of the poem in juxtaposition to the modern nihilism born from the war experience. McCrae and others of his time advocated service for God, King and Country in a way that is distinctly dated for today's teachers and students. Granfield struggles with this tension in trying to honor McCrae's literary contribution while encouraging the modernist idea that we all want peace and can solve the world's conflicts apart from the destruction of war. In trying to hold these two ideas in tension, Granfield ends up trivializing both McCrae's ultimate sacrifice of his life, as well as the enduring poem that connected millions to him through their shared World War One experience.

With a few adjustments, teachers can enjoy the otherwise strong narrative, artistic embellishment, and back story of McCrae's famous work, "In Flanders Fields."

Julie Suzanne says

Shaking my head at the library's decision to discard again. Wow. This was so well done. I learned the following stuff from this book that I should have learned in either public school or college:

- * About the origins of the poem "In Flanders Fields" (to which I hadn't even been exposed; can you believe it?) and its impact.
- * About poppies and their connection to WWI (NEVER KNEW)
- * An important date to remember...why don't we remember?
- * Everyday issues of a soldier in WWI
- * Warfare stuff I cared little about, but think is interesting now that I've learned it.

I feel that this is really important history, a matter of cultural literacy at the very least, and I feel compelled to pass this along.

This stunningly illustrated and well-written book ends with "Lest we forget." Man...we really did forget. Mission accomplished McCrae, Granfield, and Wilson. Fortunately, I predict that this is just right for my jr. high kids, so the message won't end here. Thank you.

Melissa says

I wish the historical data were either at the beginning or end of the poem instead of intermingled. But the book still deserves five stars because it is so beautifully done. The information is appropriate, the pictures are beautiful and the poem is a classic. psst: I blogged about it here: <http://modernmollymormon.blogspot.com...>

Joan says

I remember purchasing this for the branch when it first came out. One of my more memorable reference questions was an older gentleman who wanted to read a copy of this poem. I had to look it up in Grangers before I was able to find a copy in the library for the gentleman who was really happy about it.

Grangers....pre internet way of finding poetry. I recognized the poem since my mother, born in Canada in 1917, a hundred years ago, had recited the poem on occasion and told me how there was a really large plaque

in her high school honoring those graduates and teachers who had volunteered for WWI and paid the ultimate price. Americans may not know what a heavy number of Canadian lives were lost in World War One but it was immense. My mother remembered hearing her elders talk about family who had fallen in World War One. I met a distant relative in the 1970s, living in a rented garage as I recall, in Washington state, who was blinded in World War One. In short, World War One, the War to end all wars, was not all that long ago. I thought of this book and wanted memorize the poem, after reading a historical fiction for middle graders called *Five Children on the Western Front* that was excellent. I need to recite the poem a few more times in hopes that it stays in my memory but the story was fascinating. It told how McCrae was too old to be drafted but volunteered anyway and worked as a doctor on the front lines of the war. There is some dispute about precisely where and when he wrote the poem but all agree it was triggered by the death of a friend who died in the fighting. The poem swept the world. Canada used a few lines to sell Victory bonds and raised an enormous amount to fund the war. Tragically, McCrae himself did not survive the war, falling ill and dying of pneumonia. Considerably more died of infectious disease than of bullets in the war. This edition is highly recommended. It gives the well researched background interspersed among the verses of the poem which is very effective. Librarians can pull it out during April, poetry month. Usually bright happy things are pulled out. Some kids might appreciate some more realistic poetry. Of course, it can be pulled out for history units, particularly this year, when the United States entered World War One.

Shelli says

I loved everything about this book except the layout, which was terrible. That being said it only went from being a 5 star book to a 4. John McCrae was a field doctor trained in combat, during World War 1. Daily witnessing loss of life moved him to pen a touching poem that personified the respect all should have for the soldiers who gave their lives. *In Flounders Field*, named after McCrae's famous poem, not only did the illustrator do a beautiful job of bringing this poem to life, the author added several pages of information on John McCrae and the War to End all Wars. Sadly the author, publisher, whoever decided it would best to split up the poem with the pages of non-fiction information, which greatly took away from the flow and feel of the poem. Afterward I re-read just the poem pages and enjoyed it even more after reading some of the back story in the non-fiction pages.

Kody Dibble says

Very interesting look into John McCrae his poetry, lifestyle and service.

Kier (Myn Kobayashi) says

This will always remain one of my favourite poems, one that I read every November and time and time again through the year. The depth of emotion and rawness is tangible.

Autumn says

This needs to be in the curriculum of every school. It's important that everyone that thinks that war is

glorious to read this and learn the truth.

Ken Moten says

(I will be reviewing this poem from out of my anthology book One Hundred and One Famous Poems: With a Prose Supplement.)

This poem is a brief three stanza poem written during the first world war by Canadian Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae. This poem was written as a dedication to a friend of McCrae's that died during the Second Battle of Ypres. This poem has become one of the most influential poems of WWI and the [British] Commonwealth countries.

The poem had almost been thrown away but after it was published it would be used as a rallying tool for the Allied Powers. The most famous part of the poem is in the first stanza:

*"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."*

This stanza inspired the "Remembrance poppies". Most in the USA would not recognize the flower (despite the fact that it was an American that started the use of Poppies to commemorate the war dead) but in the Commonwealth it has become a very visible symbol of war and memorial.

*"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."*

Like most war poems, it does meditate on the mortality of war and death, but as you can see it is brief. This poem was written early during the war and the true horrors that would define it had not been totally grasp. That is one of the characteristics of many poems written up to this point is the very post-Enlightenment, pro-war message.

*"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."*

This part would be used as an official propaganda piece for the war effort and one understands why.

This poem would be a massively popular poem during and after the war.

Many of the writers featured in One Hundred and One Famous Poems: With a Prose Supplement fought in WWI and almost all of them died. It is staggering how many of the most talented writers of that generation

fought and dies in WWI. As famous as the poem is it is not the best poem to come out of WWI (many think that honor goes to Wilfred Owen's *Dulce et Decorum est* which describes in graphic detail what a toxic gas attack was like (this was the first 20th century war to use biological weapons) and which I may someday review myself) but again it is one of the most famous and simplest-which may explain how it gets snubbed more in modern times.

McCrae himself died of pneumonia on Jan 28 1918 in France.

Jonathan Terrington says

As a disclaimer like a few books I have on my shelves, I have not read this particular edition but it seems the best to use to write the review I wish to.

Today is ANZAC Day in Australia. This is, for those without any Australian background knowledge, the day when we celebrate our Australian and New Zealand soldiers who fought in the World Wars and in more modern wars. We celebrate their courage and we celebrate their loss so that we currently possess what we have gained.

War is not something that has ever touched me personally. I'm not naive enough to suggest that I could ever gain a true insight into war without being touched by it in some way. But what I have seen informs me that war is one of the great tragedies of humanity. One of those times where no one wins out. And yet there are heroic deeds done by individuals, which is something many poets and authors touch upon in their work.

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.

There is another poem, The Ode to Remembrance, often read here on ANZAC Day. A final line is added to conclude this poem, *Lest We Forget*. I find this one of the most poetic lines I've heard. It both marks and

comments on the fact that poems like *In Flanders Fields* reflect that those who die in wars nobly become immortalised, that they have exhibited the spirit of their nation in their patriotism. And yet there is a sense of caution: let us learn from those who now sleep in Flanders fields and across the world as a result of war.

Lest we forget. One of the most potent of all cautions against the repetition of history.

Joseph says

In Flanders Field, by John McCrae, opens with the haunting poem *In Flanders Field* and is followed up with other poems, mostly of war and with it death. McCrae captures the essence of the World War I in his work. The second part of the book contains some history of the man and several diary extracts.

McCrae was schooled as a physician, but served in the Second Boer War as an artillery officer and further served in World War I as an artillery officer before being moved to hospital duty. He preferred the big guns to working the hospital.

A short book, but very worth the read if you are interested in World War I or first hand impressions of war in general.

Dawn says

I read this book with my children a while ago, but after reading the other reviews I felt I needed to add my two cents worth. Growing up in Ontario The poem "In Flanders Fields" is taught every Remembrance day. My children who are 6, 8 and 10 all have it memorized. This book is meant to be read by those who already know the poem. It is not a good choice for reading the poem itself. It is instead meant to add a historical context to a poem that the author has assumed the reader is already familiar with. If this is your first exposure to the poem I would highly recommend you find a more readable source, because it is interrupted with historical facts in this book.

If you are reading this book with the intention of deepening your understanding of WWI and what John McCrae was experiencing as he wrote his poem than this book is perfect for you. The art work is beautiful and the historic facts great. It is wonderful to read to children, but I learned a lot too. It gave me a deeper respect for the poem and a better understanding of how heart wrenching it truly is when I understand the emotions of the man who wrote it.
