



Worksheet 1 – The Drifter Poetry Study

Meredith received the letter she had been dreading. It was from the War Department. 'We regret to inform you that your husband was killed on 12th March 1916, during an attack on an enemy position. His body has been interred in a war cemetery in Flanders.' Meredith lay down on the bed, placed her face in the pillow, and wept.

Flanders is the name of a World War 1 European battlefield spanning southern Belgium and north-west France. The poem *In Flanders Fields* was penned by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae after he witnessed the death of his friend in Flanders during a wartime battle.

Task 1: Locate a copy of the poem *In Flanders Fields* and answer the following questions:

1. Where in Flanders Fields do the poppies blow?
2. What do the crosses represent?
3. Why are the larks described as 'bravely singing'?
4. From whose point of view is the poem told?
5. Explain in your own words the author's message in the verse that begins 'Take up our quarrel with the foe...'

In the poem, McCrae refers to the copious amount of red poppies that grow in the earth at Flanders. These poppies later became a symbol of Remembrance Day which is held on 11th November each year. The poem remains one of the most memorable war poems ever written and is often used during Remembrance Day ceremonies.

Task 2: Write an information text about how the red poppy came to be known as the *Emblem of Remembrance*.

Extension Activities

- Locate a copy of the poem *We Shall Keep the Faith* that Moira Michael wrote as a reply to McCrae's *In Flanders Fields*. Answer the following questions about the poem:
 1. To whom is the author addressing in the poem?
 2. What does she say about the torch mentioned in 'In Flanders Fields'?
 3. What does she compare to the colour of the poppy?
 4. How does she describe the soldiers that are buried in Flanders Fields?
 5. How does she honour the memory of those that died?
- Compose a poem about one of your own life experiences that has evoked feelings of intense emotion (e.g. euphoria, grief, helplessness, fury.)