



# Poetry Recitation & Copywork

## Poetry Selections

This session, we have included selections from various poets on the topic of World War I. We've included six poetry selections for your kids and teens to read, listen to, memorize, and recite. They are:

- For All We Have and Are, by Rudyard Kipling
- Belgium, by Edith Wharton
- The Wife of Flanders, by G. K. Chesterton
- In Flanders Fields, by John McCrae
- For the Fallen, by Laurence Binyon
- Ode to a Snowdrop During Wartime, Namur King

For copywork, we have included Zaner-Bloser style handwriting sheets for primary, elementary, and cursive, as well as college ruled for older students. The poems we have chosen are:

- The Wife of Flanders, by G. K. Chesterton
- In Flanders Fields, by John McCrae
- For the Fallen, by Laurence Binyon
- Ode to a Snowdrop During Wartime, Namur King

*“All we have of freedom, All we use or know, This our fathers bought for us, Long and long ago”*

~ Rudyard Kipling

# The Riverside Literature Series:

## A Treasury of War Poetry

### British and American Poems of the World War 1914-1917

By George Herbert Clarke

#### Introduction

Because man is both militant and pacific, he has expressed in literature, as indeed in the other forms of art, his pacific and militant moods. Nor are these moods, of necessity, incompatible. War may become the price of peace, and peace may so decay as inevitably to bring about war. Of the dully unresponsive pacifist and the jingo patriot, quick to anger, the latter no doubt is the more dangerous to the cause of true freedom, yet both are "undesirable citizens." He who believes that peace is illusory and spurious, unless it be based upon justice and liberty, will be proud to battle, if battle he must, for the sake of those foundations.

For the most part, the poetry of war, undertaken in this spirit, has touched and exalted such special qualities as patriotism, courage, self-sacrifice, enterprise, and endurance. Where it has tended to glorify war in itself, it is chiefly because war has released those qualities, so to speak, in stirring and spectacular ways; and where it has chosen to round upon war and to upbraid it, it is because war has slain ardent and lovable youths and has brought misery and despair to women and old people. But the war poet has left the mere arguments to others. For himself, he has seen and felt. Envisaging war from various angles, now romantically, now realistically, now as the celebrating chronicler, now as the contemplative interpreter, but always in a spirit of catholic curiosity, he has sung, the fall of Troy, the Roman adventures, the mediaeval battles and crusades, the fields of Agincourt and Waterloo, and the more modern revolutions. Since Homer, he has spoken with martial eloquence through, the voices of Drayton, Spenser, Marlowe, Webster, Shakespeare, Milton, Byron, Scott, Burns, Campbell, Tennyson, Browning, the New England group, and Walt Whitman,—to mention only a few of the British and American names,—and he speaks sincerely and powerfully to-day in the writings of Kipling. Hardy, Masfield, Binyon, Newbolt, Watson, Rupert Brooke, and the two young soldiers—the one English, the other American—who have lately lost their lives while on active service: Captain Charles Hamilton Sorley, who was killed at Hulluch, October 18, 1915; and Alan Seeger, who fell, mortally wounded, during the charge on Belloy-en-Santerre, July 4, 1916.

There can be little doubt that these several minds and spirits, stirred by the passion and energy of war, and reacting sensitively both to its cruelties and to its pities, have experienced the kinship of quickened insight and finer unselfishness in the face of wide-ranging death. They have silently compared, perhaps, the normal materialistic conventions in business, politics, education, and religion, with the relief from those conventions that nearly all soldiers and many civilians experience

in time of war; for although war has its too gross and ugly side, it has not dared to learn that inflexibility of custom and conduct that deadens the spirit into a tame submission. This strange rebound and exaltation would seem to be due less to the physical realities of war—which must in many ways cramp and constrain the individual—than to the relative spiritual freedom engendered by the needs of war, if they are to be successfully met. The man of war has an altogether unusual opportunity to realize himself, to cleanse and heal himself through the mastering of his physical fears; through the facing of his moral doubts; through the reëxamination of whatever thoughts he may have possessed, theretofore, about life and death and the universe; and through the quietly unselfish devotion he owes to the welfare of his fellows and to the cause of his native land.

Into the stuff of his thought and utterance, whether he be on active service or not, the poet-interpreter of war weaves these intentions, and coöperates with his fellows in building up a little higher and better, from time to time, that edifice of truth for whose completion can be spared no human experience, no human hope.

As already suggested, English and American literatures have both received genuine accessions, even thus early, arising out of the present great conflict, and we may be sure that other equally notable contributions will be made. The present Anthology contains a number of representative poems produced by English-speaking men and women. The editorial policy has been humanly hospitable, rather than academically critical, especially in the case of some of the verses written by soldiers at the Front, which, however slight in certain instances their technical merit may be, are yet psychologically interesting as sincere transcripts of personal experience, and will, it is thought, for that very reason, peculiarly attract and interest the reader. It goes without saying that there are several poems in this group which conspicuously succeed also as works of art. For the rest, the attempt has been made, within such limitations as have been experienced, to present pretty freely the best of what has been found available in contemporary British and American war verse. It must speak for itself, and the reader will find that in not a few instances it does so with sensitive sympathy and with living power; sometimes, too, with that quietly intimate companionableness which we find in Gray's *Elegy*, and which John Masefield, while lecturing in America in 1916, so often indicated as a prime quality in English poetry. But if this quality appears in Chaucer and the pre-Romantics and Wordsworth, it appears also in Longfellow and Lowell, in Emerson and Lanier, and in William Vaughn Moody; for American poetry is, after all, as English poetry,—“with a difference,”—sprung from the same sources, and coursing along similar channels.

The new fellowship of the two great Anglo-Saxon nations which a book of this character may, to a degree, illustrate, is filled with such high promise for both of them, and for all civilization, that it is perhaps hardly too much to say, with Ambassador Walter H. Page, in his address at the Pilgrims' Dinner in London, April 12, 1917: “We shall get out of this association an indissoluble companionship, and we shall henceforth have indissoluble mutual duties for mankind. I doubt if there could be another international event comparable in large value and in long consequences to this closer association.” Mr. Balfour struck the same note when, during his mission to the United States, he expressed himself in these words: “That this great people should throw themselves whole-heartedly into this mighty struggle, prepared for all efforts and sacrifices that may be

required to win success for this most righteous cause, is an event at once so happy and so momentous that only the historian of the future will be able, as I believe, to measure its true proportions."

The words of these eminent men ratify in the field of international politics the hopeful anticipation which Tennyson expressed in his poem, *Hands all Round*, as it appeared in the *London Examiner*, February 7, 1852:—

*"Gigantic daughter of the West,  
We drink to thee across the flood,  
We know thee most, we love thee best,  
For art thou not of British blood?  
Should war's mad blast again be blown,  
Permit not thou the tyrant powers  
To fight thy mother here alone,  
But let thy broadsides roar with ours.  
    Hands all round!  
God the tyrant's cause confound!  
To our great kinsmen of the West, my friends,  
And the great name of England, round and round.  
"O rise, our strong Atlantic sons,  
When war against our freedom springs!  
O speak to Europe through your guns!  
They can be understood by kings.  
You must not mix our Queen with those  
That wish to keep their people fools;  
Our freedom's foemen are her foes,  
She comprehends the race she rules.  
    Hands all round!  
God the tyrant's cause confound!  
To our dear kinsmen of the West, my friends,  
And the great cause of Freedom, round and round."*

They ratify also the spirit of those poems in the present volume which seek to interpret to Britons and Americans their deepening friendship. "Poets," said Shelley, "are the unacknowledged legislators of the world," and he meant by legislation the guidance and determination of the verdicts of the human soul.

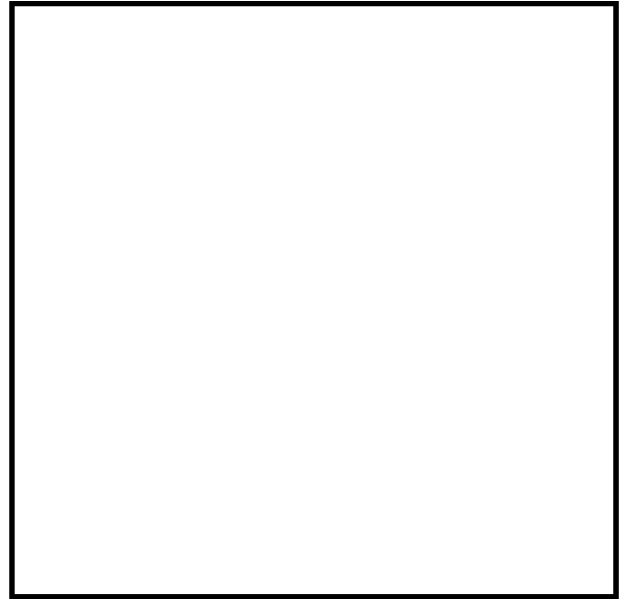
G. H. C.  
August, 1917

# Poet Study

Poet: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_



**3 Facts About the Poet:**

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**Best Known Poems by the Poet:**

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## The Wife of Flanders

Gilbert Keith Chesterton

Low and brown barns, thatched and repatched and tattered,  
Where I had seven sons until to-day,  
A little hill of hay your spur has scattered....  
This is not Paris. You have lost the way.

You, staring at your sword to find it brittle,  
Surprised at the surprise that was your plan,  
Who, shaking and breaking barriers not a little,  
Find never more the death-door of Sedan—

Must I for more than carnage call you claimant,  
Paying you a penny for each son you slay?  
Man, the whole globe in gold were no repayment  
For what you have lost.  
And how shall I repay?

What is the price of that red spark that caught me  
From a kind farm that never had a name?  
What is the price of that dead man they brought me?  
For other dead men do not look the same.

How should I pay for one poor graven steeple  
Whereon you shattered what you shall not know?  
How should I pay you, miserable people?  
How should I pay you everything you owe?

Unhappy, can I give you back your honour?  
Though I forgave, would any man forget?  
While all the great green land has trampled on her  
The treason and terror of the night we met.

Not any more in vengeance or in pardon  
An old wife bargains for a bean that's hers.  
You have no word to break: no heart to harden.  
Ride on and prosper. You have lost your spurs.

## In Flanders Fields

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.

## Ode to a snowdrop during wartime

Namur King

Fragile flower, hiding your tender purity  
In the green shrouds of unborn daffodils;  
Tentative symbol of the ultimate surety,  
Of Spring, you bring  
A waft of beauty to these derelict hills.

Here is mud ! A sticky, filthy, foul morass,  
Churned by marching men and wheels endlessly turning;  
Where once were flowers and trees, soft dew-moist grass  
And mossy banks - now tanks  
Trundle noisily through, and the woods are burning.

And yet, I know the vibrant life that lies  
Deep in defoliated trees, small flower;  
All of Summer's sweetness soon to rise,  
The drift, the lift  
Eternally, now in your loneliest hour.

## Belgium

Edith Wharton

La Belgique ne regrette rien

Not with her ruined silver spires,  
Not with her cities shamed and rent,  
Perish the imperishable fires  
That shape the homestead from the tent.

Wherever men are staunch and free,  
There shall she keep her fearless state,  
And homeless, to great nations be  
The home of all that makes them great.

## For the Fallen

Laurence Binyon

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,  
England mourns for her dead across the sea.  
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,  
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill; Death august and royal  
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres,  
There is music in the midst of desolation  
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,  
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.  
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted;  
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;  
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;  
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;  
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,  
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,  
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known  
As the stars are known to the Night;

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,  
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain;  
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,  
To the end, to the end, they remain.

## For All We Have and Are

Rudyard Kipling

For all we have and are,  
For all our children's fate,  
Stand up and meet the war.  
The Hun is at the gate!  
Our world has passed away  
In wantonness o'erthrown.  
There is nothing left to-day  
But steel and fire and stone.

Though all we knew depart,  
The old commandments stand:  
"In courage keep your heart,  
In strength lift up your hand,"

Once more we hear the word  
That sickened earth of old:  
"No law except the sword  
Unsheathed and uncontrolled,"  
Once more it knits mankind.  
Once more the nations go  
To meet and break and bind  
A crazed and driven foe.

Comfort, content, delight—  
The ages' slow-bought gain—  
They shrivelled in a night,  
Only ourselves remain  
To face the naked days  
In silent fortitude,  
Through perils and dismays  
Renewed and re-renewed.

Though all we made depart,  
The old commandments stand:  
"In patience keep your heart,  
In strength lift up your hand."

No easy hopes or lies  
Shall bring us to our goal,  
But iron sacrifice  
Of body, will, and soul  
There is but one task for all—  
For each one life to give.  
Who stands if freedom fall?  
Who dies if England live?

# Poetry Study

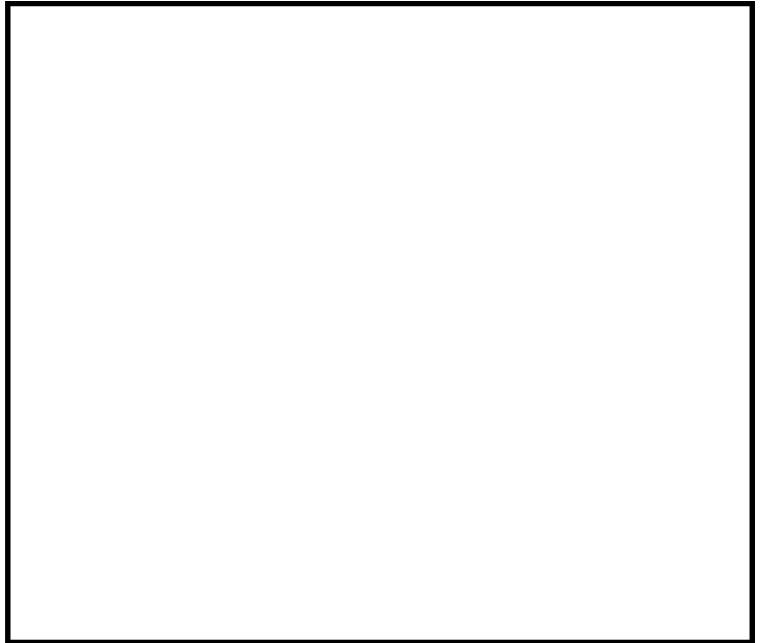
**Title:**

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**Type of Poem:**

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**Use the box to at right to draw a picture of what the poem brings to mind.**



**Write one thing you liked and did not like about the poem:**

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**Write three adjectives about the poem.**

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**Compose a few lines of your own poem inspired by this work**

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