



Tauheedul Girls

Lest We Forget

A selection of poems dedicated to the memory of the fallen soldiers of World War 1

Tauheedul Islam Girls' High School & Sixth Form College





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humanities

A Specialist Humanities College



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Foreword



David Cameron
The Prime Minister

The Great War stands as a monumental moment in British, European and world history; it will be forever remembered for the great sacrifices made by so many and for the humbling lessons that endure to this day. It is important that future generations know of the heroic soldiers who braved the grim conditions of the trenches, who faced off against the blight of the U-boats and flew into the unknown in early military aircraft. Of course, we must also appreciate the efforts of those men and women who were left at home to work in the factories, schools, offices and hospitals, providing vital domestic support to our troops and their families. The war would not have been won without these fragile, but tenacious, links to continued civilisation.

This wonderful book of poetry, written by the pupils of Tauheedul Islam Girls' High School, perfectly captures the overriding emotions that I am sure were shared by everyone fighting to preserve our freedom. The pupils of Tauheedul School should rightly be praised for their stellar efforts and it is right that the people about whom they have written continue to be honoured for their valour in such difficult circumstances.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'David Cameron'.

Lest We Forget

Lest We Forget

This is Reality

Life was pleasant – so I truly believed,
I assumed I'd live for years upon years.
I supposed my future blissfully complete,
The fictional reality carved out of my wildest dreams
Became violently blurred into the impossible,
That couldn't be.

Britain and Germany now fiercely at war,

To my beloved, I should now confess,
For me, it shall never be a good morning,
No summer breeze caresses,
No golden leaves or winter solstice blessings,
My weapons power greedy, rifles and guns;
The enemy is ready, this battle has begun,
The moment to embrace my reality has inevitably come.

I struggle to locate the resonance of explosions
Echoing through the hollow tunnels,
Reverberating silent screams of fear.
Move forward
Nothing left to contemplate but the move forward,
Death a taunting companion in the bitter loneliness.

Nostalgia haunts incessantly with cherished moments of childhood,
Hours consumed with innocent play, laughter filling the silence,
The humming of birds infused with the fragrant scent of roses:
A lingering sweet melody,
Oh, what a wonderful picture of reality.

A show of appreciation and gratitude for those
Who have fallen.

Words.

A moment of silence for you and I,
'Lest we forget the reality.'

Aiysha Pabadi (13)

Unknown Soldiers

We are heroes of war
Our strings wear old and become fragile,
Overworked and handled carelessly.

The ceasefire brought peace
But the river of blood still ran deep,
The sacrifice of the brave will never be forgotten.

We owe these men and women
Whose youth was snatched cruelly,
Renowned for their suffering
But to most of us they were,
Unknown soldiers.

Nadia Saloojee and Sana Patel (13)

Blind to the War

Guns shooting, fires blazing,
Mothers crying, young children dying,
Violence fills the place as lives end helplessly,
Were seventeen million lives worth the sacrifice?

Telegraphs fly out like enraged bombs from the sky,
Every drop of water and gasp of breath becomes cherished blessings,
Death mocking our desperation and despair,
How can the greed of one intoxicate the hearts of millions?

Sick of the lies, you search for the answers
But all you find is the tears, glistening in frightened eyes,
Wishing on every star, wishes that don't come true,
Will there be a brighter tomorrow?

Countries economically distressed, leaders confused,
Soldiers worried, aiming high above their trenches,
The blood and dust conceal where to draw the line,
Was this the only way or were we blind to other possibilities?

The soldiers standing to attention: strong and proud
Hiding the dark truth,
The little hope left, beaten by blackened hearts,
Now tell me, how could you go on?

The remembrance commences every year,
Showing our appreciation of their courage and heroism,
Red poppies honouring their worth with pride,
But have the forgotten received justice for all that they sacrificed?

Amina Iqbal (12)

What is the Truth?

Proud, strong heroes,
Brave and young,
Making their country proud!
Off to war
Saving millions of lives,
Now, isn't that the plain truth?

Bloody mayhem, maddening chaos,
Dead bodies, and innocent children forsaken and lost,
Suffering wherever you look.
Off to war
Blameless lives destroyed and unclaimed.

Ignorant people, poor choices,
Extreme measures ruining our lives,
To be killed or to kill?
Inevitably, that is the question on your mind.

Let the emotions unravel,
Feel the pain, the sorrow, the fear
Of those who are caught in the deadening crossfire,
Then tell me: is war something you are proud of?

You won't have heard of my name,
Let alone my story.
On this battlefield,
Both shall die with me

Fareeha Khan and Haleemah Adalat (13)

If I Should Die

If I should die, I want the world to think of this:
The victory of Britain in the War was made upon sacrifices.
Triggered off by Austria's sudden shout of tragedy,
The world spun a chain of bravery, loss and agony.
Citizens of Britain fighting for the honour of their country.

The thought of my loved ones in my sweet home,
Catalysed the fear of death in all its doom.
If I should die, I want the word to think of this:
The victory of Britain was made by taking endless risks.

Anisa Hussain and Subnam Hassan (13)

If I Don't Come Back Tomorrow

If I don't come back,
I want them to know,
I did my best
And I could do no more.

If I don't come back,
I want them to know,
No man should have to endure
The pain of death, so mercilessly slow.

If I don't come back,
I want them to know,
I died for my country,
Fighting the war.

Humaira Toorawa (12) and Huma Ahmed (13)

Only the Truth

Dear darling,

My darling, how should I tell you my story;
The only version of the truth?

We got there, thought that we were well prepared,
Those earth-shattering thuds, and we all despaired,

They had plans, but so did we,
I wasn't going to surrender to them so readily,

We slept in the dark trenches, in the numbing cold,
Wishing we were anywhere but there, what a pitiful sight
We were to behold

We tried to rest, late into the night,
But the solemn atmosphere gave no respite,

We dreaded every day that came,
Hoping we wouldn't face the same calamities the next day,

I was lonely, shaken and confused,
I was hoping to come back to you.

My body said stop, but my heart said go,
What was I meant to do?

I wasn't so sure.

Humaira Issa (12)

The Battlefield

Droves of battle-wearied soldiers swarmed over my earthy skin,
an infection that broke through me slowly, mercilessly.

The Battlefield.

The empty glass mirrors of their eyes were of both the hunter
and the hunted,
The unloving and the unloved, the inflicting and the inflicted.

The Battlefield.

Their cracked voices reflected my cracked pain; a shattered
mirror, helpless,
Throats raw from screaming.

The Battlefield.

We drowned together in the echoes of their own bombshells.
Their blood darkened into mine, as their hopeless faces withdrew
from life.

The Battlefield.

They coated me with fiery blood, as the burning fuel
Of dying despair enveloped me.

The Battlefield.

I sent back their loss, regenerated into a thousand perfect flowers:
poppies to
Plead for mercy that this torment would finally stop.

Batool Sethi and Hurmat Shabzad (13)

Worth the Fight

Blood pumping, heart racing: a vehicle ready for the road ahead,
Lives in our hands; for the victory we deserve,
Nobody questioning our motive to fight.

All I see is misery, a continuous cycle of killing,
Our strings are being played in a tune unknown to us,
Cold-blooded deaths surrounding us, for a purpose once known.

We were ordered to march into the dark,
Side by side, our shoulders brushing together,
The harder we strove, the more power we gained.

Bang! Boom! Rapid fire,

Our lives were in peril, but all I could hear was the shortness
of my breath,
Hoping that slowly, it would all just simply end.

Ayesha Valli and Maariah Umarji (14)

Life as a Soldier

The gunshots begin
The gases escape,
The race has started.

Poisonous stench diffuses
Into the cold, thick air,
Falling
As a burden of hypnotising ashes.

Inching forward
Finding my way,
This could be my very last second-
Would I last another day?

With these people
Struggling for their lives,
Fighting.
An eye for an eye?

Ruqayyah Sidat (12) and Amatullah Sajid (13)

A Soldier's Life

Tunnelling underground,
Stumbling in the blistering cold,
Gazing at my worn photo,
Searching for the story that it once told.

Crawling through the trenches,
Securing the grip on my mask,
Glancing back at the unfortunate soldiers,
Who didn't escape the venomous gas.

Marching into battle,
Trying to feel prepared,
Thinking of my children,
And all the golden memories we once shared.

Combatting in the fields,
Holding fast to my weapon,
Suddenly I felt it:
Death tapping on my weary shoulder.

Lying in the warzone,
A fatal wound to the core,
Staring at the bleak, grey sky
And then, nothing at all.

Dragged along the ground,
Tossed into the trenches,
My stricken friend stares at me,
His hand caresses my head.

Resting among the poppies,
A striking red and green,
My body lies in solitude,
A hero I shall seem.

Yasira Salim (11)

Living Conditions

I can't sleep,
I can't dream,
My nightmare continues

Trenches dark and stifling,
Infested with the panic and fear of soldiers,
My nightmare continues

Are we winning?
Are we losing?
Regardless: my nightmare continues

Guns blaring,
Bombs detonating,
My nightmare continues

Do the soldiers need to fight?
What's the conflict for?
And yet my nightmare continues

I am told we have won,
Serenity at last,
My nightmare ends.

Nazifa Saleh and Zafrah Daya (12)

A Boy No More

Amidst the desert sands,
Dawn has just begun,
Battle rages on,
Bombing veils the rising sun.

A boy not yet a man,
Holds a picture to his heart
Of loved ones not forgotten,
Though oceans keep them apart.

Called to serve his country,
Land of freedom, home of brave,
Risking his existence
For the lives that he may save.

Concealing his dismay,
Lifting his head high,
His arms embrace a trusted one,
Watching him quietly die.

A boy he is no more,
Today he stands as a man,
His heart filled with rage,
His mind struggling to understand.

Raised to be a man of God,
Taught not to kill,
Now placed in the battlefield,
Revenge driven by his own will.

Resting beneath the sunset
Wounded, he dreams of home,
Lying on the desert floor,
A soldier died alone.

Zulaikha Hanif (12)

A Woman in War

Hearts heavy with despair,
Shoulders burdened with the load,
Our fathers, husbands and sons,
Massacred by murderous guns.

A war is no place for a woman,
Nor a home for a young boy or man,
If you could hear the silent plea of death
From their scorched and blackened mouths,
You'd beg for this horror of this war to pass.

A war is no place for a woman,
Nor for the softhearted and feeble,
When lifeless bodies are bruised and left in the rubble,
It is the Nightingales that we summon.

*Humairah Hanif, Saleha Chala, Maryam Ali, Aisha Hanslot,
Sheereen Patel and Aisha Patel (18)*

Holding On

She waits for him fervently,
Trusts him infinitely,
Reassures him ardently,
But even after all this,
He's gone.

He fights for her nobly,
Clings to hope desperately,
Supports his men devotedly,
But his time has come,
He has to go on.

Seeking redemption,
Eternally bound,
Defying, believing,
Incessantly questioning:
But why must this go on?

Humairaa Dudhwala and Ammaarah Desai (18)

Gone

Fear swam in the pools of his blue eyes,
As cruel words of unremitting demise
Whirled through his mind,
His thoughts fleeting through the darkest depths of death.

“Down! Down!” The sergeant yelled,
As bombs and bullets crashed and imploded,
Slowly, the world faded away,
And only the deafening silence was certain to stay.

Dust and dirt smothered his corpse,
His hands would grow pale, his heart grow cold,
“Farewell,”
His final, conscious thought.

Shadowy memories of his blissful past
Flooded his drowsy mind,
His beloved wife, his only son;
The treasured sentiments he would leave behind.

Aneesah Kholwadia and Ayesha Khansia (13)

The End

The journey I once pursued is now slowly waning away,
The trail of footsteps gradually diminishing,
Empty words beseeching me to stay,
My love, my life is woefully passing me by
With burning anguish shrouded as momentary relief, I take a sigh.

Witnessing the sight of my dying comrades each day,
Leaving me in endless turmoil and disarray.

I march across the battlefield with limited moments to spare,
I feel the rugged ground beneath me as I fall, sinking in
earthly despair,
The last patch of parched grass, surrounding the barren trees,
I keel over, sunken upon my knees.

The pain, the sorrow,
Will not be there tomorrow.

Fabima Patel (12)

Sleep

The future is uncertain,
Of this I am certain,
But for now I am allowed to sleep.

Shivers are running down my spine,
I hear the enemy crossing the borderline,
But for now I am allowed to sleep.

I hunch up in the corner,
And I feel so much smaller,
This is the perfect spot to sleep.

I hear bombs shrieking,
Leather boots creaking,
How can you expect me to fall asleep?

*Zainab Beg (12), Raeesa Yasin (13)
and Ayesha Mohammed (12)*

The Day After Tomorrow

The day after tomorrow, to see the sun rise gloriously triumphant,
Beaming over familial faces I yearn for,
With forsaken longing.

The day after tomorrow, filled with anxiety,
Depressed, alone, fighting this war,
The day after tomorrow, will I suffer more?

The day after tomorrow, BOOM! BANG!
As the bombs and bullets come storming down,
The day after tomorrow, will our success be renowned?

The day after tomorrow, dead bodies may lie,
Cold, pale, innocent faces wishing to be free,
The day after tomorrow, surely victory will be.

Aysba Dalal, Safa Bukhari and Sumayyah Ahmed (13)

Shell Shock

Shaking is the deathly symptom,
His life definitively altered,
Evacuation from the trenches,

Glimpses of the unforeseeable future,
Collapsing into the dirt of the present,
Feeble and wretched.

Hence, they shall never forget how the opposition once fired at them,
Lurking within the fatigued walls of aged memory,
Lest they forget: how they transcended from a tragedy,
that shall forever remain.

Zabraa Master (16)

Lost

A disease of the mind that sadistically destroys
The essence of man.
Detrimental.
Cataclysmic.

Shell shock.

Immobilised,
Memories dwindle,
And emotions turbulent,
Blurred visions at their peak,
And all that is left dissolves into dust.

Along the deserted highway,
Another estranged soul is returned,
Wounded skeleton deep,
Another defect is covered.

Buried deep within this hole inside,
Is left a cart of old, tarnished episodes,
After this I can never feel,
The way I felt before.

Aisha M Patel and Khadijah M Patel (15)

Amongst Flanders Field

Amongst Flanders Fields
Rest thousands of soldiers
Their struggles highlighted,
Their voices heard.
The nation stands tall
Elevated by their sacrifices,
Struck by their sense of duty.
Transcending time and space
Their voices elevated
At one with mine.

Aisha Patel (14)



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