



The Indian Soldier, by Jasleen Singh from Bristol Grammar School
First Place Winner of 2017/18 Poetry Competition, ages 11-14

This poem is to commemorate all the 1.3 million Indian Soldiers who came to an unknown country to fight for the British during World War 1.

Home is where the heart is
I heard a British Soldier say that here
If that is true my love
My home is a long, long way from here

My heart is under the mango tree
Where its sweet blossoms smile almost as wide as me
Instead shells are pouring like the rains in the monsoon
Only we don't know for certain that these will ever stop

My heart is wondering somewhere far away from this God forsaken land
Where night is never silent and stars are never seen
Our richly spiced food is traded for a cold hard bread
It impales my teeth like the bullets struck in the walls back home

My heart longs to fly away from here and join the flock of migrating birds
They are escaping the smoke that plumes like wispy ghosts
For a brighter land with silks of red, yellow and orange
And a sun that beams just as vividly

My heart longs for freedom, freedom and peace
I have a wish that my children can live in a world with more justice than me
I do this for a promise, my love
A promise to own the soil beneath our feet

My heart belongs to the corn fields
And a warm breeze running free
Instead the corpses cover the fields
Like sheaves of harvested corn

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My heart belongs to the children, hold them tight my dear
Tell them whatever happens, Papa will always be near
Tell them funny stories, make them laugh from ear to ear
I shall be able to hear their laughter, even from a place as far as here

Our hearts long to sing
Instead they are silenced
Hidden amongst the millions of white crosses surrounding our graves
Why?

We too gave our all when it came to the cry of the fight

"Thank you for the amazing centenary finale at Buckingham Palace, it was a fantastic day and it was a truly amazing experience reading out my poem in front of everyone."

- Jasleen Singh



After winning the NSI Competition and reading her poem at Buckingham Palace, Jasleen was asked to read a prayer at the Service of Thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey on Sunday 11th November 2018. The Service was attended by Her Majesty the Queen, and the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

[Jasleen wrote a blog post about the Westminster Abbey service here.](#)

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