



## Field of Souls

By Lucy Wall

*Between the 17th of July and the 11th of November 2014, a major art installation was placed around the Tower of London to mark the one hundred year anniversary of the first full day of Britain's involvement in the First World War. Created by artists Paul Cummins and Tom Piper, 888,246 ceramic poppies were placed within the Tower's famous moat with each poppy representing a British military fatality during the war. It was on the 9th of November that year that my husband and I decided to visit the exhibition and witness for ourselves the dramatic views that the poppies created.*

*After my initial thrill and awe at the vibrancy and sheer volume of poppies, the magnitude of the losses suffered during the war began to really hit me. As I stared at the poppies and considered what they represented I suddenly didn't feel like I was looking at a field of flowers anymore but rather I was staring at a field of souls. It was this thought that inspired me to start writing my poem.*

A cold afternoon at the Tower of London, skirting the puddles and patches of mud;  
I gaze at the vision of red that's before me: the colour of passion, the colour of blood.  
Thousands of poppies now stand to attention, lovingly crafted with no two the same.  
A flower for every soul lost in the battle with each representing a face and a name.

One for each father who fought for his children, who thought of their future when on the front line.  
One for each son who in uniform proudly, kissed mother farewell and said he'd be fine.  
Poppies that speak of the hard working women: the daughters and mothers, the aunties and wives  
Whose service was rendered while nursing the injured; the brave men and women who gave up their lives.

They fought for our freedom, for king and for country. The future of Britain was worth fighting for.  
The heart of each poppy as black as death's shadow, as black as the hearts at the root of the war.  
I ponder a thought as I stare at the poppies and vividly picture a scene in my mind,  
I think of the tears of their mothers and children, the harrowing grief of those left behind.

What if the flowers were solitary symbols and each represented a *tear* that was shed?  
This river of crimson would rush over Britain and every last inch would be covered in red.  
The battle was won but there were no winners. The victory came at a staggering cost.  
They fought a good fight and did what was needed but now we will always remember the lost.

I think of another who died for our freedom. Another who fought with the darkest of foes.  
I picture the Cross at the place called Golgotha. The place where another red river flows.  
War was declared in the garden of Eden as sin and creation became intertwined.  
A battle that needed a mighty Redeemer who'd fight for the prize- the souls of mankind.

The cruellest of enemies seeking mass slaughter whose merciless rampage would only get worse,  
Who'd laugh in the face of an army of thousands! No guns or grenades could have lifted the curse.  
The victory lay on a spiritual level, this battle was not just with flesh and with bone.  
One had the will and the strength that was needed. No one could win this but Jesus alone.

I think of the conflict surrounding His mission, the barrage of warfare He faced from the start.  
The forces of hell that were working against Him but couldn't contend with the love in His heart.  
The rumours surrounding His very conception; His mother, presumed to be caught in her sin.  
The cries of her labour were heard from a *stable*! The Saviour of *all* found no room at the Inn.



The birth of the Boy who would be the Messiah; Herod breathed murder on hearing the news!  
His life already in perilous danger; the Babe who was born to be King of the Jews.  
The Creator of all came to save His creation! Enduring the hardships and sorrows of man.  
He battled fatigue and every temptation but never digressed from fulfilling His plan.

Through blistering heat He earnestly travelled, healing the sick and seeking the lost.  
Constantly dealing with false accusations yet speaking God's truth whatever the cost.  
Always contending with man-made religion, opposing corruption and "rules" of the day.  
Exposing the Pharisees' lies and deception while showing His people the trustworthy way.

Then came the ultimate test of His Spirit, marking the start of His loneliest time;  
Deep in the garden He cried to His Father, "Nevertheless, not My will but Thine!"  
Jesus endured the harshest betrayal, faced His arrest and arduous trial.  
Bearing the beatings, the scourging and mocking; to rescue His people He'd suffer each mile.

He watched His disciples disown Him completely, rejected by man as He hung on the Tree.  
The fiercest of battles this world has witnessed; when Jesus Christ died to save you and me!  
The God of the Universe entered the trenches and thought of His children to fight to the death.  
Our great Liberator, unstoppable Champion, fought as a Man and gave every last breath!

This battle Christ won and we are the winners! He conquered the grave and defeated death's claim.  
The greatest of victories won by our Saviour, now every soul born can be saved by His name!  
Let's give God the glory, rejoice in this triumph! May all our praises rush forth like a flood!  
Let every heart on the Earth give Him honour for every last inch has been drenched in His blood.

Now we await the final of battles for soon comes the day as the Prophets foretold  
When Christ will return to set up His Kingdom, take hold of the dragon, that serpent of old.  
Oh this will be a war like no other as Christ will appear as bright as the sun!  
How we rejoice in the victory promised for Jesus our Saviour has already won!

Praise to our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!  
The ending is written with Satan defeated! Chained to the pits and bound by hell's gate.  
How the heart yearns for Jesus' arrival! Keenly awaiting the First and the Last.  
Bringing the end to sin and destruction, rendering warfare a thing of the past.

Steadfast we wait for that glittering future, behold He is coming to rule His domain!  
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be upon us, sing Alleluia! Forever He'll reign!  
So as we live for our King in our country let's show our respect and not be denied;  
Remembering those who died for our freedom by gratefully wearing the poppy with pride.

*Revelation 19:11-14*

*"Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses."*