

Karina MacLeod  
April 10, 2017  
Memorial Day Essay  
Language Arts

As I walk past the rows and rows of graves adorned with American flags, bucket and brush held in my hand as I participate in a service project, I remember the hundreds who did so before me, with their hands full of flowers, and wondering why they felt so empty while their hearts remained heavy. Why, why does the toll of freedom carry such a hefty debt? The origins of Memorial Day are shrouded in confusion about which town it started with, though we do know that it started at the end of the Civil War, the bloodiest war in U.S. history. At first, Memorial Day was called Decoration Day, because of the many women who would go out and decorate the soldier's graves. These observances were held on the thirtieth of May all across America. It wasn't until after WW II that Memorial Day was for all soldiers who died in combat. This somber remembrance is now held in the last Monday of May.

I snap back to reality and realize that while I have been thinking about Memorial Day, I have lost myself in the maze of white. At first I am afraid of being separated from my group, but then I recognize what would have had to happen in order for me to get lost. I kneel down, and read the name of the marker before me. Martha Richson. I move on reading the names of the stones before me. Edward, John, Alice, Sean. I kneel down and scrub each stone slowly, trying to speak to the name of each blow my feet. "Who are you?" I asked. "Who in your family found out you were dead? What did they do when they found out? And why, why, did you ever join?" Why did you need to suffer this fate, a hero such as you? My heart seems to sink to the ground with my knees. As I cry at the tombstones, the marker doesn't move, it seems to be used to this. I hear

my group calling my name, so I slowly rise. But I swear to this day, as I walked away towards the group, all of the stones spoke in one whisper. "Remember me, remember my pain.

Remember my trudge through pouring rain. I died for my country, and for you. I died for a cause I knew was true. Remember."

## I am a Soldier

With weary trudge  
And heavy trod  
Step by step  
On enemy sod

My weapon lies heavy  
On my back  
Tasting the blood  
I want to take back

Blistering deserts  
Deathly heat  
Frostbite nipping  
My hands and feet

Every day that I rise  
I face a new day  
One of death and misery  
Because someone decided that we had to pay

I'll pay the price of freedom  
I'll pay the price with pain  
I'll pay the debt with my own life  
And trudge through pouring rain

I died for my country  
I fell for my comrade  
I am a martyr for my religion of freedom  
And even though I am gone, I am not sad, because I died protecting them

I am a soldier  
I am a peacemaker  
I am a candle  
I am the light  
I am freedom  
But now I'm gone  
Remember Me