

SANDY ROSS

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acknowledging 'creative age'
residents at Royalcliffe for
this collaborative piece



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Paddington Station hosts this statue of the Unknown Soldier, his bronze hands holding a letter. Passers-by at the train platform wonder what the note might say. Some even compose fictional contents, writing of a 'what if' world where the statue stands in for a personal someone fallen and far away.



Here's our sentiment, imagined as a group by Royalcliffe residents in one of our story circles guided by Sandy Ross. To honour veterans, our

Letter to the Unknown Soldier © 2016

Dear Charlie Joe:

I've been thinking of you, even though it's a dozen years since you were a mischievous boy in my class – a sparkle in your eye, as if you were thinking up something else to do.

You liked books I read that had adventure, *Treasure Island* and such. I still can see you sticking your tongue out at Mary Jane, yanking her pigtailed. But she stood up to you, took her slate and gave you a bump on the noggin. It was obvious you were first loves. I wasn't surprised, indeed I was pleased to hear you married her before you shipped out.

[and on a separate page less faded, tucked in the same envelope...]

I'm nearing retirement now. It's come full circle. I'd not long been a teacher, Charlie Joe, when you were among my first students. So it seems fitting, as my career winds down into a comfortable pace of golfing, picnics, and storytelling in the retirement residence, that my final classes are with your own grandchildren.

The twins you never got to see grow up were, you'd be glad to know, every bit as mischievous, adventurous, loveable, and memorable as you – times two. Now, their children are in my class and, this week, are learning about Remembrance Day.

Over the years, I've always taught my pupils to buy a poppy and wear it with pride. Rest assured, Charlie Joe, they truly appreciate the hero you are and the sacrifice of all who served, both those who came home and those fallen.

Ever grateful, your grade 3 teacher, Miss Johnson (Bessie Lou)