

Second World War Poems chosen by Hugh Haughton.  
Faber and Faber 2004.

Mention the words War Poetry to most people and the image that is conjured is of the scribes of the First World War who described so brilliantly and poignantly the pain, loss and utter futility of that terrible conflict. The poets of the Second World War, and there were many, never seem to rate the same amount of interest or recognition, though this new collection from Faber goes a long way to redressing the balance and correcting the misconception.

Hugh Haughton has gathered a wonderful array of work together, from the pen of men and women from most of the major countries caught in the conflict: Britons, Americans, Germans, Poles, Russians, Japanese, Australians, Israelis and others.

The poems reflect the drama, scope and horror of a global conflict that revolutionised warfare, raised genocide to unparalleled heights of depravity, and changed the world. All are good, some are excellent, and a few are so powerful as to be unforgettable.

This is a collection to savour and revisit many times, a worthy companion to the collection of First World War poetry published by Faber in 2003.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh