Matthew Gregory Lewis (1775-1818)

24 The Soldier's Grave

"Oh! cold is the night, and the rain it beats hard;
Why com'st thou, fair damsel, to Guildford churchyard?"
"Nay, heed me not, stranger; no terrors appal,
For chill though the rain drops, my tears faster fall."

"But why is the rose from your cheek fled away?
And where is the soldier, so gallant and gay?"
"Oh! sorrow has wither'd health's roses so sweet,
And the gay, gallant soldier lies dead at my feet."

"Now tell me, fair damsel, then, what shall I do,
To soothe the distress of thy bosom so true?"
"Oh! return in the morning, and close where you see
The grave of a soldier make there one for me."

His heart it was sad at thus hearing her rave;
He return'd in the morning, but dug not her grave:
For his courtship soon making her sorrow discard,
Now forgot lies the soldier in Guildford churchyard.

(From *The Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis*. With Many Pieces in Prose and Verse, Never Before Published. Vol. 1. London: Henry Colburn, 1839)