

Charles Wolfe (1791-1823)

1 *The Burial of Sir John Moore*

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,  
As his corse to the rampart we hurried;  
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot  
O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

We buried him darkly at dead of night, 5  
The sods with our bayonets turning,  
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light,  
And the lantern dimly burning.

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,  
Not in sheet or in shroud we wound him; 10  
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest,  
With his martial cloak around him.

Few and short were the prayers we said,  
And we spoke not a word of sorrow;  
But we steadfastly gazed on the face that was dead, 15  
And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought as we hollowed his narrow bed,  
And smoothed down his lonely pillow,  
That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head,  
And we far away on the billow! 20

Lightly they'll talk of the spirit that's gone,  
And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him —  
But little he'll reck if they'll let him sleep on,  
In the grave where a Briton has laid him.

But half of our heavy task was done, 25  
When the clock struck the hour for retiring;  
And we heard the distant and random gun  
That the foe was sullenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,  
From the field of his fame fresh and gory;                    30  
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone —  
But we left him alone in his glory!

*1817*

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