

George Gordon Byron (1788-1824)

4 “The Good Night”

“Adieu, adieu! my native shore  
Fades o’er the waters blue;  
The Night-winds sigh, the breakers roar,  
And shrieks the wild sea-mew.  
Yon Sun that sets upon the sea 5  
We follow in his flight;  
Farewell awhile to him and thee,  
My native Land — Good Night!

“A few short hours and He will rise  
To give the morrow birth; 10  
And I shall hail the main and skies,  
But not my mother earth.  
Deserted is my own good hall,  
Its hearth is desolate;  
Wild weeds are gathering on the wall; 15  
My dog howls at the gate.

“Come hither, hither, my little page!  
Why dost thou weep and wail?  
Or dost thou dread the billow’s rage,  
Or tremble at the gale? 20  
But dash the tear-drop from thine eye;  
Our ship is swift and strong:  
Our fleetest falcon scarce can fly  
More merrily along.

‘Let winds be shrill, let waves roll high, 25  
I fear not wave nor wind:  
Yet marvel not, Sir Childe, that I  
Am sorrowful in mind;  
For I have from my father gone,  
A mother whom I love, 30  
And have no friend, save these alone,  
But thee — and one above.

‘My father bless’d me fervently,  
Yet did not much complain;  
But sorely will my mother sigh  
Till I come back again.’ — 35

“Enough, enough, my little lad!  
Such tears become thine eye;  
If I thy guileless bosom had,  
Mine own would not be dry.” 40

“Come hither, hither, my staunch yeoman,  
Why dost thou look so pale?  
Or dost thou dread a French foeman?  
Or shiver at the gale?” —

‘Deem’st thou I tremble for my life? 45  
Sir Childe, I ’m not so weak;  
But thinking on an absent wife  
Will blanch a faithful cheek.

‘My spouse and boys dwell near thy hall,  
Along the bordering lake, 50  
And when they on their father call,  
What answer shall she make?’ —

“Enough, enough, my yeoman good,  
Thy grief let none gainsay;  
But I, who am of lighter mood, 55  
Will laugh to flee away.

“For who would trust the seeming sighs  
Of wife or paramour?  
Fresh feres will dry the bright blue eyes  
We late saw streaming o’er. 60

For pleasures past I do not grieve,  
Nor perils gathering near;  
My greatest grief is that I leave  
No thing that claims a tear.

“And now I’m in the world alone, 65  
Upon the wide, wide sea:  
But why should I for others groan,  
When none will sigh for me?

Perchance my dog will whine in vain,  
Till fed by stranger hands; 70  
But long ere I come back again  
He'd tear me where he stands.

“With thee, my bark, I'll swiftly go  
Athwart the foaming brine;  
Nor care what land thou bear'st me to, 75  
So not again to mine.

Welcome, welcome, ye dark blue waves!  
And when you fail my sight,  
Welcome, ye deserts, and ye caves!  
My native Land — Good Night!” 80

*1809*

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