

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **Charles Wolfe**

**- poems -**

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## **Oh say not that my heart is cold**

Oh say not that my heart is cold  
To aught that once could warm it -  
That Nature's Form so dear of old  
No more has power to charm it;  
Or that th' ungenerous world can chill  
One glow of fond emotion  
For those who made it dearer still,  
And shared my wild devotion.

Still oft those solemn scenes I view  
In rapt and dreamy sadness;  
Oft look on those who loved them too  
With Fancy's idle gladness;  
Again I longed to view the light  
In Nature's features glowing;  
Again to tread the mountain's height,  
And taste the soul's o'erflowing.

Stern Duty rose, and frowning flung  
His leaden chain around me;  
With iron look and sullen tongue  
He muttered as he bound me -  
'The mountain breeze, the boundless heaven,  
Unfit for toil the creature;  
These for the free alone were given, -  
But what have slaves with Nature?'

Charles Wolfe

## **The Burial of Sir John Moore after Corunna**

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,  
The sods with our bayonets turning,  
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light  
And the lanthorn dimly burning.

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,  
Not in sheet or in shroud we wound him;  
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,  
And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

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

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 let him sleep on  
In the grave where a Briton has laid him.

But half of our heavy task was done  
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;  
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone,  
But we left him alone with his glory.

Charles Wolfe

## **The Burial of Sir John Moore at Corunna**

Not a drum was heard, nor 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,  
The sods with our bayonets turning;  
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light  
And the lantern dimly burning.

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,  
Nor in sheet nor in shroud we wound him;  
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,  
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,  
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Charles Wolfe

## **The Last Rose Of Summer**

That strain again? It seems to tell  
Of something like a joy departed;  
I love its mourning accents well,  
Like voice of one, ah! broken-hearted.

That note that pensive dies away,  
And can each answering thrill awaken,  
It sadly, wildly, seems to say,  
Thy meek heart mourns its truth forsaken.

Or there was one who never more  
Shall meet thee with the looks of gladness,  
When all of happier life was o'er,  
When first began thy night of sadness.

Sweet mourner, cease that melting strain,  
Too well it suits the grave's cold slumbers;  
Too well the heart that loved in vain  
Breathes, lives, and weeps in those wild numbers.

Charles Wolfe

## To Mary

If I had thought thou couldst have died,  
I might not weep for thee;  
But I forgot, when by thy side,  
That thou couldst mortal be:  
It never through my mind had past  
The time would e'er be o'er,  
And I on thee should look my last,  
And thou shouldst smile no more!

And still upon that face I look,  
And think 'twill smile again;  
And still the thought I will not brook,  
That I must look in vain.  
But when I speak—thou dost not say  
What thou ne'er left'st unsaid;  
And now I feel, as well I may,  
Sweet Mary, thou art dead!

If thou wouldst stay, e'en as thou art,  
All cold and all serene—  
I still might press thy silent heart,  
And where thy smiles have been.  
While e'en thy chill, bleak corse I have,  
Thou seemest still mine own;  
But there—I lay thee in thy grave,  
And I am now alone!

I do not think, where'er thou art,  
Thou hast forgotten me;  
And I, perhaps, may soothe this heart  
In thinking too of thee:  
Yet there was round thee such a dawn  
Of light ne'er seen before,  
As fancy never could have drawn,  
And never can restore!

Charles Wolfe