

Classic Poetry Series

Thomas E. Spencer
- poems -

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Thomas E. Spencer()

Do I Love Thee

I ask my heart, "Do I love thee?"
But how can I e'er forget
The feelings of joy and rapture
That thrilled me when first we met?
The memory of each glad meeting
Is treasured within my heart,
Which has well-nigh ceased its beating,
Since, in sorrow, we had to part.

Each night, as I seek my pillow,
I murmur a prayer for thee,
I breathe thy name, as the sunbeams
Flash red on the eastern sea.
Thy spirit is still the beacon
That guides me 'mid care and strife,
And there 'twill remain for ever,
My darling, my love, my life.

Thomas E. Spencer

Farewell

As we travel Life's weary journey,
And plod through the gathering years,
With our burdens of care and sorrow,
O'er a pathway bedewed with tears.
If, perchance, for a fleeting moment
Our hearts should with rapture swell,
We have added but one more sorrow,
When we bid the glad time "Farewell".

I have watched the bright dawn awaking,
And noted each changing light,
As the sun, in its morning splendour,
Dispelled the dark gloom of night.
I have welcomed its bright rays stealing
Over hill-top, and wood, and dell;
Yet, my joy was alloyed with sorrow,
As I bade the bright stars "Farewell".

I have seen the red sun descending
To its home in the glowing west,
Whilst the tremulous voice of nature
Was solemnly lulled to rest.
I have welcomed the stars, appearing,
And greeted them one by one,
Yet, my greeting was toned with sadness,
As I said "Farewell" to the sun.

When we welcome the summer sunshine,
Farewell to the flowers of Spring.
Adieu to the fruits of Autumn,
When we welcome the frosty king.
Good-bye to the joys of childhood,
When vigorous youth appears;
Then - a season of strife and turmoil,
And - farewell to the vanished years.

I am sighing a farewell message,
As I sit in the gathering gloom.
Farewell to all earthly sorrows,

Then - rest, in the silent tomb.
Farewell to the trees, and flowers,
To mountain, and stream, and dell,
Farewell to the glorious sunlight,
To the moon and stars, "Farewell"

Thomas E. Spencer

How Mcdougal Topped The Score

A peaceful spot is Piper's Flat. The folk that live around -
They keep themselves by keeping sheep and turning up the ground;
But the climate is erratic, and the consequences are
The struggle with the elements is everlasting war.
We plough, and sow, and harrow - then sit down and pray for rain;
And then we get all flooded out and have to start again.
But the folk are now rejoicing as they ne'er rejoiced before,
For we've played Molongo cricket, and M'Dougal topped the score!

Molongo had a head on it, and challenged us to play
A single-innings match for lunch - the losing team to pay.
We were not great guns at cricket, but we couldn't well say, "No!"
So we all began to practise, and we let the reaping go.
We scoured the Flat for ten miles round to muster up our men,
But when the list was totalled we could only number ten.
Then up spoke big Tim Brady: he was always slow to speak,
And he said - "What price M'Dougal, who lives down at Cooper's Creek?"

So we sent for old M'Dougal, and he stated in reply
That he'd never played at cricket, but he'd half a mind to try.
He couldn't come to practise - he was getting in his hay,
But he guessed he'd show the beggars from Molongo how to play.
Now, M'Dougal was a Scotchman, and a canny one at that,
So he started in to practise with a pailing for a bat.
He got Mrs Mac. to bowl him, but she couldn't run at all,
So he trained his sheep-dog, Pincher, how to scout and fetch the ball.

Now, Pincher was no puppy; he was old, and worn, and grey;
But he understood M'Dougal, and - accustomed to obey -
When M'Dougal cried out "Fetch it!" he would fetch it in a trice,
But, until the word was "Drop it!" he would grip it like a vice.
And each succeeding night they played until the light grew dim:
Sometimes M'Dougal struck the ball - and sometimes the ball struck him!
Each time he struck, the ball would plough a furrow in the ground,
And when he missed the impetus would turn him three times round.

The fatal day at length arrived - the day that was to see
Molongo bite the dust, or Piper's Flat knocked up a tree!
Molongo's captain won the toss, and sent his men to bat,

And they gave some leather-hunting to the men from Piper's Flat.
When the ball sped where M'Dougal stood, firm planted in his track,
He shut his eyes, and turned him round, and stopped it - with his back!
The highest score was twenty-two, the total sixty-six,
When Brady sent a yorker down which scattered Johnson's sticks.

Then Piper's Flat went in to bat, for glory and renown,
But, like the grass before the scythe, our wickets tumbled down.
"Nine wickets down for seventeen, with fifty more to win!"
Our captain heaved a heavy sigh, and sent M'Dougal in.
"Ten pounds to one you'll lose it!" cried a barracker from town;
But M'Dougal said "I'll tak' it mon!" and planked the money down.
Then he girded up his moleskins in a self-reliant style,
Threw off his hat and boots, and faced the bowler with a smile.

He held the bat the wrong side out, and Johnson with a grin
Stepped lightly to the bowling crease, and sent a "wobbler" in;
M'Dougal spooned it softly back, and Johnson waited there,
But M'Dougal, crying "Fetch it!" started running like a hare.
Molongo shouted "Victory! He's out as sure as eggs,"
When Pinched started through the crowd, and ran through Johnson's legs.
He seized the ball like lightning; then he ran behind a log,
An M'Dougal kept on running, while Molongo chased the dog!

They chased him up, they chased him down, they chased him round, and then
He darted through a slip-rail as the scorer shouted "Ten!"
M'Dougal puffed; Molongo swore; excitement was intense;
As the scorer marked down twenty, Pincher cleared a barbed-wire fence.
"Let us head him!" shrieked Molongo. "Brain the mongrel with a bat!"
"Run it out! Good old M'Dougal!" yelled the men of Piper's Flat.
And M'Dougal kept on jogging, and then Pincher doubled back,
And the scorer counted "Forty" as they raced across the track.

M'Dougal's legs were going fast, Molongo's breath was gone -
But still Molongo chased the dog - M'Dougal struggled on.
When the scorer shouted "Fifty" then they knew the chase would cease;
And M'Dougal gasped out "Drop it!" as he dropped within his crease.
Then Pincher dropped the ball, and as instinctively he knew
Discretion was the wiser plan, he disappeared from view;
And as Molongo's beaten men exhausted lay around
We raised M'Dougal shoulder high, and bore him from the ground.

We bore him to M'Ginniss's, where lunch was ready laid,
And filled him up with whisky-punch, for which Molongo paid.
We drank his health in bumpers, and we cheered him three times three,
And when Molongo got its breath, Molongo joined the spree.
And the critics say they never saw a cricket match like that,
When M'Dougal broke the record in the game at Piper's Flat;
And the folks were jubilating as they never did before;
For we played Molongo cricket - and M'Dougal topped the score!

Thomas E. Spencer

Not Too Bad

De cottage vas close py der garden gate,
It vas not mighdty hardt to find it,
A couple of gum-trees grew shoost in front,
Und a pig\shty grew shoost behind it.
Dere vos milk-cows und sheep on der clover-flat
Und a creek vhere der vater ran,
Der misdress of all, vas der Vidder McCaul,
Und I vos her handy man.

Ach, shveet vas der ploom on der orchard-trees,
Und lofely der flowers in shpring;
But, der vidder's daughter. Yemima Ann,
She vas shveeter ash efferyting.
She valked on der ferry ground I lofed,
Und her eyes were so lofely prawn,
Dat vhenaffer I see dat she looked at me,
Vhy, I felt mineself top-side down.

I lofed mine life ash I lofed dat girl,
Und a vik from her tvinkling eye
Ash I helped her moundt on der old prawn mare
Made me feel apout ten feet high.
Vhen she cantered home ash der sun vent down,
Und I lifted her oop to der ground,
Vhen I felt her yoomp, mine heardt vent boomp,
Und I felt apout twelfe feet round.

So I shpeaks to mineself, ' I must hafe dat girl,
For mithout her I aint no use;'
So I tole her von day vhat a duck she vas,
Und she tell me I vas a coose.
Den a shearer coomed town from der Lachlan,
Pout ash tall ash a wool-shed toor,
Und he took her away on a pullock-tray,
Und she neffer comes pack some more.

So I vent, vat you calls, ' clean off your shoomps,'
I crinds oop mine teeth und schvear;
I knocks mineself town mit a pag of shaff,

Und I picks mineself oop py mine hair.
I shvears I could hang and trown mineself,
Und fill mineself oop mit shot too;
Put, shoost vhen I run to get mine gun,
Der vidder, she tole me not to.

She said, ash she fried me some eggs for mine tea,
Und her tears shpluttered in der pan,
'Vas it not goot enough to her daughter lose,
Mithout losing her handy man?
Vas der fish not askh good vhat vas in der sea
Ash der fish vhat vas taken oudt?
If der shnapper I sought vas got shnapped oop und caught,
Dere vas plenty more shvimmin spout.'

So I said, 'Do you know vhere dat fish to find,
Apout vat you gone und told me?'
Und I town-sat mineself py der vidder's side,
(Und the vidder she neffer shcold me).
Ash der vidder she mix oop her tears mit mine,
I got prave und mine heardt grew polder;
So mine left arm I placed round der vidder's vaist
Und der vidder's head fell on mine shoulter.

Ach, shveet vas der shmell from der new-fried eggs,
Vhich der vidder vas shoost peen frying;
Und shveet vas der glance from der vidder's eye,
(Mit her head on mine shoulter lying).
If I gissed her ten times I gissed her vonce
Pefore effer I thought of shtoppin:
Und der pig pullock-pell in der milk-pan fell,
Und ve neffer heardt it droppin.

I takes mine seat in der parlour now,
In der gitche I hangs mine hat,
Und der milk-cows feed shoost across der creek,
Und der sheep on her clover-flat.
I shnapped oop der fish dat vas shvimmin apout,
Und I neffer no more got mad,
Und I tinks of a night, ash mine shmoke-pipe I light,
Dat I didn't do - NOT TOO BAD.

O'Toole And Mcsharry

In the valley of the Lachlan, where the perfume from the pines
Fills the glowing summer air like incense spreading;
Where the silent flowing river like a bar of silver shines
When the winter moon its pallid beams is shedding;
In a hut on a selection, near a still and silent pool,
Lived two mates, who used to shear and fence and carry;
The one was known near and far as Dandy Dan O'Toole
And the other as Cornelius McSharry.

And they'd share each other's blankets, and each other's horses ride,
And go off together shearing in the summer;
They would canter on from sunrise to the gloaming, side by side,
While McSharry rode the Barb and Dan the Drummer.
And the boys along the Lachlan recognised it as a rule
From Eugowra to the plains of Wanandarry,
That if ever love was stronger than McSharry's for O'Toole
'Twas the love O'Toole extended to McSharry.

And their love might have continued and been constant to the end
And they might have still been affable and jolly,
But they halted at a shanty where the river takes a bend,
And were waited on by Doolan's daughter, Polly.
Now, this pretty Polly Doolan was so natty, neat and cool
And so pleasant that they both agreed to tarry,
For she winked her dexter eyelid at susceptible O'Toole,
While she slyly winked the other — at McSharry.

So they drank her health in bumpers till the rising of the moon,
And she had them both in bondage so completely
That each time they talked of going she said, "Must you go so soon?"
And they couldn't go, she smiled at them so sweetly.
Dan O'Toole grew sentimental and McSharry played the fool,
Though they each had sworn an oath they'd never marry,
Yet the self-same dart from Cupid's bow that vanquished Dan O'Toole
Had gone through the heart of honest Con McSharry.

Then McSharry thought if Dandy Dan got drunk and went to bed,
He (McSharry) could indulge his little folly,
And Dan thought if McSharry once in drunken sleep lay spread,

He could have a little flirt with pretty Polly;
So they kept the bottle going till they both were pretty full,
And yet each rival seemed inclined to tarry;
The precise amount of pain-killer it took to fill O'Toole,
Was required to close the optics of McSharry.

So the rivals lost their tempers and they called each other names
And disturbed the Doolan children from their pillows,
And when Doolan came and told them that he wouldn't have such games,
They must go and fight it out beneath the willows.
So they went beneath the willows, near a deep and shady pool,
With as much inside as each of them could carry,
And McSharry started thumping the proboscis of O'Toole,`
And O'Toole retaliated on McSharry.

And they fought till they were winded, and yet neither had the best,
Though from each of them the blood was freely flowing;
And they paused at last to breathe awhile and take a moment's rest,
But O'Toole's two eyes with rage were fairly glowing;
Then without a moment's warning he charged forward like a bull,
And before poor Con had time to run or parry,
With a terrible momentum the big head of Dan O'Toole
Went bump! into the stomach of McSharry.

And when the force of the concussion laid McSharry out quite still
With his feet above his head among the bushes,
While O'Toole, with the momentum, cannoned madly down the hill
And fell plump in the lagoon among the rushes.
Like a weedy river-god he climbed the far side of the pool,
And he did not for one single moment tarry,
For the curse of Cain was in the brain of Dandy Dan O'Toole,
Who felt certain he had settled poor McSharry.

Now, while Dan O'Toole was stealing through the still and silent night,
And his aching brain with pain-killer was throbbing,
McSharry lay and listened, till his heart stood still with fright,
And he eased his guilty soul with silent sobbing.
For he heard his boon companion falling headlong in the pool,
And he thought he was as dead as poor old Harry,
And McSharry mourned the drowning of poor Dandy Dan O'Toole,
While O'Toole was sadly weeping for McSharry.

And the valley of the Lachlan never more will know the men
That were once so loving, frolicsome and frisky,
For O'Toole cleared out to Queensland and was never seen again,
While McSharry started south and took to whisky.
And McSharry, in his nightmare, often sees that fatal pool,
And the pricks of guilty conscience tries to parry;
While away among the back-blocks wanders Dandy Dan O'Toole,
Always flying from the ghost of Con McSharry.

Thomas E. Spencer

Rum And Water

Stifling was the air, and heavy; blowflies buzzed and held a levee,
And the mid-day sun shone hot upon the plains of Bungaroo,
As Tobias Mathew Carey, a devout bush missionary,
Urged his broken-winded horse towards the township of Warhoo.
He was visiting the stations and delivering orations
About everlasting torture and the land of Kingdom Come,
And astounding all his hearers, both the rouseabouts and shearers,
When descanting on the horrors that result from drinking rum.

As Tobias Mathew Carey, lost in visions bright and airy,
Tried to goad his lean Pegasus to a canter from a jog,
All his visions were sent flying as his horse abruptly shying
At a newly wakened-something that was camped beside a log.
It was bearded, bronzed and hairy, and Tobias Mathew Carey
Had a very shrewd suspicion as the object he espied,
And observed its bleary winking, that the object had been drinking,
A suspicion which was strengthened by a bottle at its side.

It was Jacob William Wheeler, better known as "Jake the Spieler,"
Just returning from a sojourn in the township of Warhoo,
Where, by fast-repeated stages, he had swamped his cheque for wages,
And for language made a record for the plains of Bungaroo.
Then the earnest missionary, Mr. Toby Mathew Carey,
Like a busy bee desiring to improve each shining hour,
Gave his horse a spell much needed, and immediately proceeded
To pour down on Jake the Spieler, an admonitory shower.

He commenced his exhortation with a striking illustration
Of the physical and moral degradation that must come
To the unrepentant sinner who takes whisky with his dinner,
And converts his stomach into a receptacle for rum.
"Give attention to my query," said the ardent missionary:
"Do you not perceive that Satan is this moment calling you?
He is shouting! He is calling in a voice that is appalling:
Do you hear him? And the Spieler answered sadly - "Yes! I do."

"I can prove it is impious" said the eloquent Tobias,
"To drink stuff containing alcohol, and liquors that are strong,
And I'll prove to demonstration that your guzzling inclination

Is quite morally, and socially, and physically wrong.
When about to drain a bottle, or pour whisky down your throttle,
You should think about the thousands who have perished for its sake.
Gone! To the Davey Jones's locker, through the wine that is a mocker,
And which biteth like a serpent's tooth and stingeth like a snake."

Toby paused, and Jake replying said, "It ain't no use denying
That your logic is convincing, and your arguments are sound.
I have heard with admiration your remarks and peroration,
And your knowledge of the subject seems extensive and profound.
Yet, in spite of all your spouting, there is just one thing I'm doubting,
But I'm open to conviction, so convince me if you can.
As the iron's hot now strike it, just convince me I don't like it,
And I'll chuck the grog, and sign the pledge, and keep it like a man."

Then Tobias Mathew Carey eyed the Spieler bronzed and hairy,
But his tongue no word could utter, and the silence was intense,
As the Spieler, slowly rising, in a style quite patronising
Blandly smiled upon Tobias, and continued his defence.
"In your arguments I noticed that the scriptures you misquoted,
But you know, Old Nick proved long ago that two could play at that.
Which has caused the greatest slaughter? Was it rum or was it water?
If you say it was the former then I'll contradict it flat.

"When Old Noah in the deluge, in the Ark was taking refuge,
All the other people in the world by water met their fate.
And King Pharaoh's countless army! - Did they drink and all go balmy?
No! You'll find they died by water if you'll just investigate.
All the records of the ages, mentioned in the sacred pages,
Only tell of one example, and the fact you know well,
Where a cove a drink was craving and for water started raving,
And that beggar was located - where he ought to be - in Hell!"

Jake then dropped the tone effusive, and began to be abusive,
Swore he'd "pick the missionary up and dropp him in the dirt,"
Vowed he'd "twist his blooming nose up, make him turn his blinded toes
up,
Sing him for a dusty fiver, or else fight him for his shirt."
And the air was hot and heavy, and the blowflies held their levee,
And the evening sun shone red upon the plains of Bungaroo:
As Tobias Mathew Carey, a disgusted missionary,
Spurred his broken-winded steed towards the township of Warhoo.

Thomas E. Spencer

Schneider Strauss

I vas all der country hunting for a man I wants to meet,
I vas bursting me to schlog him on der cop.
If mine hand I vonce can on him lay, I'll hit him mit mine feet
'Till he'll neffer know vchich side of him vas top.
He vas "Dandy Pat from Ballarat", mit mighty gifts of gab,
Und he got me to insure me for mine house.
Put, py shinks, if I comes down on him, I'll schlog him mit a schlab
Till he von't some more tricks play mit Schneider Strauss.

I vas built mine house mit packing cases, roofed him in mit tin,
Mit a gutter for der vater, und a shpout;
Und suppose some leetle cracks der vas, vat let der vind come in,
Dere vas lots of pigger vons to let it out.
So efery night I drunk mine pipe und smoked mine lager peer,
Und I felt shoost most ash happy ash a mouse;
Till von efening apout two o'clock, a voice falls on mine ear,
Und it said, "Vas you dat man called Schneider Strauss?"

Und der voice vas dat insurance man. He coomed und sat him down
On a candle box, und talked like eferythings;
Py der vay der vords fell out of him, you'd bet a half-a-crown
Dat his tongue vas on a see-saw vorked mit shprings.
Und he talked apout insurances, und told me I could get
Lots of money if a fire purnt down mine house,
So I paid him down two pound ker-splash, und says to him,
"You bet,
Dat you von't find no plowflies catch on Schneider Strauss.

Dat insurance man he gafe me, vat you call, "a polisee",
Und I nearly laughed mine sides out mit der yoke.
In apout a veek, or sefen days - mine house -
Oh, vere vas he?
He vas gone; und dere vas notings left but smoke.
So der Gompany I vent to see, to get mine leetle bill,
Und I promised me a yolly big carouse;
But like forty tousand tons of boulders falling down a hill,
Did der troubles tumble down on Schneider Strauss.

Vhen der Gompany I seen he asked me vhat I was apout?

Und I told him I vas coomed to get some tin.
Put, he called a pig policeman und shouted "Roon him out."
Dey put me on a canvas suit, dey cut me off mine hair,
In some vater cold like ice, dey made me souse;
Und der shtones I vas preaking opp for six months, you can schvear
Dey vas not so bad proke up as Schneider Strauss.

Und mine house vas gone to plazes, und mine money vas gone too;
Dat insurance man - vhere he vas - who can tell?
Und mine polisee - mine lots of tin - vas gone clean oop der flue.
It vas turned to shmoke, und dat vas gone ash well.
Put, I vant dat nice insurance man, to schlog him on der cop,
If I dropp on him he'll vish he vas a mouse,
For I'll turn his outsides inside, till I bet I'll make him shtop
Playing paddymelon tricks mit Schneider Strauss.

Thomas E. Spencer

The Rouseabout

In a humble hut, on a scrubby flat,
Near the land of the setting sun,
Lived a simple but honest rouseabout,
Who rejoiced in the name of Dunn.
He could warble as sweet as a bandicoot,
He could dance like a kangaroo,
His age, it was just about four-feet ten,
And his height about thirty-two.

He worshipped a beautiful female maid
Who lived on a distant plain;
Whose husband had gone to a far-off land,
And had never come back again.
She had bright blue hair, she had rosy eyes,
And her cheeks were of golden hue.
So Tommy set off, as the sun went down,
To tell her he loved her true.

He traversed the hills and the mountain peaks,
He climbed up a rugged plain,
He swam the beds of the dried-up creeks
And he tramped o'er the raging main.
He saw not the wind on the distant hills,
He heard not the rising moon,
For his soul was dead, and his burning head
Was as calm as a big monsoon.

His eye, like a hurricane, roared aloud,
His voice, like the lightning flashed,
The blustering blizzard it boomed and burst
As on through the dust he splashed.
He rode on a flea-bitten chestnut mare,
With a patent pneumatic tyre;
And the sparks from the feet of his flying steed
Set Billabong Creek on fire.

He leapt from the train at the half-way house,
And stood at the maiden's door;
He wept at the sight of that dear old spot

Which he never had seen before;
He stood on his head at the maiden's feet,
And he begged her his lot to share,
Then, brushing tear from his glist'ning ear,
He spoke of his dumb despair.

"See! see!" he exclaimed to the winsome maid,
in syllables tall and sweet,
"The whole of my expectations I cast
At thy beautiful, blushing feet.
For you I would live - through eternity!
Say 'yes' - for my own sweet sake,
And without a murmur I'll sacrifice
All the millions I hope to make.

Then the maiden rested her blushing nose
For a moment on Tommy's chest,
And she said, as she cuddled his crumpled form
To her soft and capacious breast,
"As I have been true in the years to come,
I'll be true in the past," said she.
And she winked her ear at a native bear
That was perched on a pumpkin tree.

Thomas E. Spencer

The Song Of The Sundowner

I'm the monarch of valley, and hill, and plain,
And the king of this golden land.
A continent broad is my vast domain,
And its people at my command.
My tribute I levy on high and low,
And I chuckle at Fortune's frown;
No matter how far in the day I go,
I'm at home when the sun goes down.

In the drought-stricken plains of the lone Paroo,
When the rainless earth is bare,
I take toll from the shepherd and jackeroo,
And I sample their humble fare.
Not a fig care I though the stock may die,
And the sun-cracked plains be brown;
I can make for the east, where the grass is high
I'm at home when the sun goes down.

When river and creek their banks o'er leap,
And the flood rolls raging by;
When the settlers are mourning their crops and sheep,
I can watch them without a sigh.
What matter to me if their fences go,
If their horses and cattle drown?
I can find a good meal when the sun is low,
And a home when the sun goes down.

So I wander away at my own sweet will,
Be it northerly, south or west;
When I'm hungry my paunch I can always fill,
When I'm tired I can always rest.
I care not what others may do or think,
I'm a monarch without a crown'
I can always be sure of my food and drink,
And a home when the sun goes down.

Thomas E. Spencer

The Voice Of The Willows

Hiding away from the sunlight,
Close by a rippling stream,
Hallowed by childish fancies
And many a waking dream;
There is my royal palace,
Within it my regal throne,
The former, a grave of willows,
The latter, a mossy stone.
And legends of hope did the willows tell
To my childish ears, in that rustic dell.

Here, in my sunny childhood,
I dreamed in my mystic home,
Weaving the fairy garlands
To wear in the years to come.
Friendship, and love, and honour,
They all were to be my own;
The future was strewn with roses,
As I dreamed on my mossy stone.
And still through the leaves, as they fluttered or fell
The breezes sang, in the willow dell.

Visions of hope are departed,
Fairy-like dreams have fled.
The thorns still remain, but the roses,
Like friendship and love, are dead.
The breezes sigh through the willows,
I ponder and dream alone
Of the life beyond the river,
As I sit on my mossy stone.
And the breezes sound like a funeral knell,
As they sigh and sob, through the willow dell.

Thomas E. Spencer

Think Of Me

Think of me, when 'mid joy and gladness
They bark glides smoothly down life's tranquil stream.
When thy life, free from care or sadness,
Is calm and peaceful as a summer dream.

Think of me, though thy path be dreary,
Though care and sorrow may thy life enshroud;
When crushed hopes make the heart grow weary
And life seems darkened by a wintry cloud.

Think of me, let thy heart grow kinder
In summer's sunshine or in winter's gloom,
Think of me, when thy sole reminder
Is but the shadow of my silent tomb.

Thomas E. Spencer

Why Doherty Died

It was out on the Bogan near Billabong Creek
Where the sky shines like brass seven days in the week,
Where the buzzin' mosquitoes annoy you all night
And the blowflies come wakin' you up at daylight;
Where the people get weary and sad and forlorn
Till they wish they had died long before they were born;
There's a flat near the river, I knew the place well,
For 'twas there Dinny Doherty kept the hotel.

Dinny Doherty died. 'Twasn't aisy to say
Just the cause of the trouble that tuk him away;
If 'twas measles or whoopin' cough, croup or catarrh,
Or the things docters pickle and put in a jar.
Not a dochter was nigh when he come to his death
So we reckoned he died just through shortage of breath —
We didn't know how these fine points to decide;
What we did know for certain was: Doherty died.

The coroner came up from Bottle-nose Flat,
And twelve of us wid him on Doherty sat.
The hate was intense; there was whisky galore —
When we'd finished we weren't as wise as before.
We were roastin'; yet there, wid a shmile on his face,
Lay poor Dinny, the only cool man in the place.
Yet divil a one in the crowd could decide
Or even imagine why Doherty died.

The old pub it seemed lonesome whin Dinny was gone,
Lavin' poor Kitty Doherty grievin' alone.
Every time that I called she cried: "Phwat will I do?
Darlin' Dinny, come back to me, Cushla! Wirroo!
Faith it's lonely I am today, Dinny, asthore!
Don't be sayin' you're dead, that I'll see you no more."
Whin I tried to console her, she bitterly cried,
"I have no one to love me since Doherty died."
"I kape pinin'," says she, "till I'm mere shkin and bone."
(Poor Kitty! She only weighed siventeen shtone.)
"Sure, life widhout love is like bread widhout yaste."
Poor Kitty! Her heart was as big as a her waist.

And what is the pain? — 'tisn't iver everyone knows
Whin a big heart like Kitty's wid love overflows.
Kitty's love was as broad as the ocean is wide,
But she'd no one to share it since Doherty died.

'Twas a hot summner's day when a visit I paid,
For the hate was hundhred and tin in the shade;
Poor Kitty looked sad as I inthered the gate,
And her cheeks were quite moist wid her tears (and the hate):
But 'twas cosy she looked as she sat in the bar,
And I whispered, "Poor girl, is it lonely ye are?"
"Bedad! Lonely's no name for it," Kitty replied.
"I'm just frettin' me heart out since Doherty died.

Then, says I, "Faith, this isn't the weather to fret!"
And I wiped her plump cheeks, that were clammy and wet;
"Sure, Kitty," says I, "you must hould up your head,
For the world isn't impty if one man is dead.
To be livin' and pinin' alone's a disgrace;
Can you find no good man to take Doherty's place?"
Then she shmiled through her tears, and she said as she sighed:
"Ah! the good men are scarce since poor Doherty died."

"Och," says I, "to talk that way is fiddle-de-dee;
There are good men left yet, Kitty — what about me?"
Then, before you'd say "Jack";, o'er the bar she had leapt,
And she flung herself on me bosom and wept.
'Twas in vain that I thried to get out to get cool,
She was harder to shift than a big bale of wool.
And I thought, as she lay on me bosom and cried:
"Faith! 'Tis now that I know why poor Doherty died."

Thomas E. Spencer