

Classic Poetry Series

**Stephen C. Foster**  
**- poems -**

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# Stephen C. Foster(1826-1864)

# Beautiful Dreamer Serenade

1 Beautiful dreamer, wake unto me,  
2 Starlight and dewdrops are waiting for thee;  
3 Sounds of the rude world heard in the day,  
4 Lull'd by the moonlight have all pass'd a way!

5 Beautiful dreamer, queen of my song,  
6 List while I woo thee with soft melody;  
7 Gone are the cares of life's busy throng, --  
8 Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me!  
9 Beautiful dreamer awake unto me!

10 Beautiful dreamer, out on the sea  
11 Mermaids are chaunting the wild lorelie;  
12 Over the streamlet vapors are borne,  
13 Waiting to fade at the bright coming morn.

14 Beautiful dreamer, beam on my heart,  
15 E'en as the morn on the streamlet and sea;  
16 Then will all clouds of sorrow depart, --  
17 Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me!  
18 Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me!

Stephen C. Foster

# Camptown Races

De Camptown ladies sing dis song -- Doo-dah! doo-dah!  
De Camptown racetrack five miles long -- Oh! doo-dah day!  
I come down dah wid my hat caved in -- Doo-dah! doo-dah!  
I go back home wid a pocket full of tin -- Oh! doo-dah day!

Chorus

Gwine to run all night! Gwine to run all day!  
I'll bet my money on de bob-tail nag -- Somebody bet on de bay!

De long tail filly and de big black hoss -- Doo-dah! doo-dah!  
Dey fly de track and dey both cut across -- Oh! doo-dah day!  
De blind hoss sticken in a big mud hole -- Doo-dah! doo-dah!  
Can't touch bottom wid a ten foot pole -- Oh! doo-dah day!

Chorus

Old muley cow come on to de track -- Doo-dah! doo-dah!  
De bob-tail fling her ober his back -- Oh! doo-dah day!  
Den fly along like a rail-road car -- Doo-dah! doo-dah!  
Runnin' a race with a shootin' star -- Oh! doo-dah day!

Chorus

Seen dem flyin' on a ten mile heat -- Doo-dah! doo-dah!  
Round de race track, den repeat -- Oh! doo-dah day!  
I win my money on de bob-tail nag -- Doo-dah! doo-dah!  
I keep my money in an old tow-bag -- Oh! doo-dah day!

Chorus

Stephen C. Foster

# Gentle Annie

Thou wilt come no more, gentle Annie,  
Like a flower thy spirit did depart;  
Thou art gone, alas! like the many  
That have bloomed in the summer of my heart.

Chorus

Shall we nevermore behold thee;  
Never hear thy winning voice again --  
When the Springtime comes, gentle Annie,  
When the wild flowers are scattered o'er the plain?

We have roamed and loved mid the bowers  
When thy downy cheeks were in their bloom;  
Now I stand alone mid the flowers  
While they mingle their perfumes o'er thy tomb.

Chorus

Ah! the hours grow sad while I ponder  
Near the silent spot where thou art laid,  
And my heart bows down when I wander  
By the streams and the meadows where we strayed.

Chorus

Stephen C. Foster

# Gwine To Run All Night, Or De Camptown Races

- 1 De Camptown ladies sing dis song -- [Chorus] Doo-dah! doo-dah!
- 2 [Solo] De Camp-town race-track five miles long -- [Chorus] Oh! doo-dah day!
- 3 [Solo] I come down dah wid my hat caved in -- Doo-dah! doo-dah!
- 4 I go back home wid a pocket full of tin -- [Chorus] Oh! doo-dah day!
  
- 5 Gwine to run all night!
- 6 Gwine to run all day!
- 7 I'll bet my money on de bob-tail nag --
- 8 Somebody bet on de bay.
  
- 9 [Solo] De long tail filly and de big black hoss -- [Chorus] Doo-dah! doo-dah!
- 10 [Solo] Dey fly de track and dey both cut across -- [Chorus] Oh! doo-dah-day!
- 11 [Solo] De blind hoss sticken in a big mud hole -- [Chorus] Doo-dah! doo-dah!
- 12 [Solo] Can't touch bottom wid a ten foot pole -- [Chorus] Oh! doo-dah-day!
  
- 13 Gwine to run all night!
- 14 Gwine to run all day!
- 15 I'll bet my money on de bob-tail nag --
- 16 Somebody bet on de bay.
  
- 17 [Solo] Old muley cow come on to de track -- [Chorus] Doo-dah! doo-dah!
- 18 [Solo] De bob-tail fling her ober his back -- [Chorus] Oh! doo-dah-day!
- 19 [Solo] Den fly along like a rail-road car -- [Chorus] Doo-dah! doo-dah!
- 20 [Solo] Runnin' a race wid a shootin' star -- [Chorus] Oh! doo-dah-day!
  
- 21 Gwine to run all night!
- 22 Gwine to run all day!
- 23 I'll bet my money on de bob-tail nag --
- 24 Somebody bet on de bay.
  
- 25 See dem flyin' on a ten mile heat -- [Chorus] Doo-dah doo-dah!
- 26 Round de race track, den repeat -- [Chorus] Oh! doo-dah-day!
- 27 I win my money on de bob-tail nag -- [Chorus] Doo-dah! doo-dah!
- 28 I keep my money in an old tow-bag -- [Chorus] Oh! doo-dah-day!
  
- 29 Gwine to run all night!

- 30 Gwine to run all day!  
31 I'll bet my money on de bob-tail nag --  
32 Somebody bet on de bay.

Stephen C. Foster

# Hard Times Come Again No More

Let us pause in life's pleasures and count its many tears,  
While we all sup sorrow with the poor;  
There's a song that will linger forever in our ears;  
Oh, hard times come again no more.

Chorus:

'Tis the song, the sigh of the weary,  
Hard times, hard times, come again no more,  
Many days you have lingered around my cabin door,  
Oh, hard times, come again no more.

While we seek mirth and beauty and music light and gay,  
There are frail forms fainting at the door;  
Though their voices are silent, their pleading looks will say  
Oh, hard times come again no more.

Chorus

There's a pale drooping maiden who toils her life away,  
With a worn heart whose better days are o'er:  
Though her voice would be merry, 'tis sighing all the day,  
Oh, hard times come again no more.

Chorus

'Tis a sigh that is wafted across the troubled wave,  
'Tis a wail that is heard upon the shore,  
'Tis a dirge that is murmured around the lowly grave,  
Oh, hard times come again no more.

Chorus

Stephen C. Foster



# Jeanie With The Light Brown Hair

1 I dream of Jeanie with the light brown hair,  
2 Borne, like a vapor, on the summer air;  
3 I see her tripping where the bright streams play,  
4 Happy as the daisies that dance on her way.  
5 Many were the wild notes her merry voice would pour.  
6 Many were the blithe birds that warbled them o'er:  
7 Oh! I dream of Jeanie with the light brown hair,  
8 Floating, like a vapor, on the soft summer air.

9 I long for Jeanie with the daydawn smile,  
10 Radiant in gladness, warm with winning guile;  
11 I hear her melodies, like joys gone by,  
12 Sighing round my heart o'er the fond hopes that die: --  
13 Sighing like the night wind and sobbing like the rain, --  
14 Wailing for the lost one that comes not again:  
15 Oh! I long for Jeanie, and my heart bows low,  
16 Never more to find her where the bright waters flow.

17 I sigh for Jeanie, but her light form strayed  
18 Far from the fond hearts round her native glade;  
19 Her smiles have vanished and her sweet songs flown,  
20 Flitting like the dreams that have cheered us and gone.  
21 Now the nodding wild flowers may wither on the shore  
22 While her gentle fingers will cull them no more:  
23 Oh! I sigh for Jeanie with the light brown hair,  
24 Floating, like a vapor, on the soft summer air.

Stephen C. Foster

# Massa's In De Cold Ground

ROUND de meadows am a-ringing  
De darkeys' mournful song,  
While de mocking-bird am singing,  
Happy as de day am long.  
Where de ivy am a-creeping,  
O'er de grassy mound,  
Dere old massa am a-sleeping,  
Sleeping in de cold, cold ground.

Chorus:

Down in de corn-field  
Hear dat mournful sound:  
All de darkeys am a-weeping,—  
Massa's in de cold, cold ground.

When de autumn leaves were falling,  
When de days were cold,  
'T was hard to hear old massa calling,  
Cayse he was so weak and old.  
Now de orange tree am blooming  
On de sandy shore,  
Now de summer days am coming,—  
Massa nebber calls no more. (Chorus)

Massa make de darkeys love him,  
Cayse he was so kind;  
Now dey sadly weep above him,  
Mourning cayse he leave dem behind.  
I cannot work before to-morrow,  
Cayse de tear-drop flow;  
I try to drive away my sorrow,  
Pickin' on de old banjo. (Chorus)

Stephen C. Foster

# My Old Kentucky Home, Good Night!

1 The sun shines bright in the old Kentucky home,  
2 'Tis summer, the darkies are gay,  
3 The corn top's ripe and the meadow's in the bloom  
4 While the birds make music all the day.  
5 The young folks roll on the little cabin floor,  
6 All merry, all happy and bright:  
7 By'n by Hard Times comes a knocking at the door,  
8 Then my old Kentucky Home, good night!

9 [Chorus] Weep no more, my lady, oh! weep no more to-day!  
10 We will sing one song  
11 For the old Kentucky Home,  
12 For the old Kentucky Home, far away.

13 [Solo] They hunt no more for the possum and the coon  
14 On the meadow, the hill and the shore,  
15 They sing no more by the glimmer of the moon,  
16 On the bench by the old cabin door.  
17 The day goes by like a shadow o'er the heart,  
18 With sorrow where all was delight:  
19 The time has come when the darkies have to part,  
20 Then my old Kentucky Home, good-night!

21 [Chorus] Weep no more, my lady, oh! weep no more to-day!  
22 We will sing one song  
23 For the old Kentucky Home,  
24 For the old Kentucky Home, far away.

25 [Solo] The head must bow and the back will have to bend,  
26 Wherever the darkey may go:  
27 A few more days, and the trouble all will end  
28 In the field where the sugar-canes grow.  
29 A few more days for to tote the weary load,  
30 No matter 'twill never be light,  
31 A few more days till we totter on the road,  
32 Then my old Kentucky Home, good-night!

33 [Chorus] Weep no more, my lady, oh! weep no more to-day!  
34 We will sing one song

- 35 For the old Kentucky Home,  
36 For the old Kentucky Home, far away.

Stephen C. Foster

# My Wife Is A Most Knowing Woman

My wife is a most knowing woman,  
She always is finding me out,  
She never will hear explanations  
But instantly puts me to rout,  
There's no use to try and deceive her,  
If out with my friends night or day,  
In a most inconceivable manner,  
She tells where I've been right away,  
She says that I'm 'mean' and 'inhuman.'  
Oh! My wife is a most knowing woman.

She would've been hung up for witchcraft  
If she had lived sooner, I know,  
There's no hiding anything from her,  
She knows what I do -- where I go;  
And if I come in after midnight  
And say 'I have been to the lodge,'  
Oh, she says while she flies in a fury,  
'Now don't think to play such a dodge!  
It's all very fine, but won't do, man,'  
Oh, my wife is a most knowing woman.

Not often I go out to dinner  
And come home a little 'so so,'  
I try to creep up through the hall-way,  
As still as a mouse, on tip-toe,  
She's sure to be waiting up for me  
And then comes a nice little scene,  
'What, you tell me you're sober, you wretch you,  
Now don't think that I am so green!  
My life is quite worn out with you, man,'  
Oh, my wife is a most knowing woman!

She knows me much better than I do,  
Her eyes are like those of a lynx,  
Though how she discovers my secrets  
Is a riddle would puzzle a sphynx,  
On fair days, when we go out walking,  
If ladies look at me askance,

In the most harmless way, I assure you,  
My wife gives me, oh! such a glance,  
And says 'all these insults you'll rue, man,'  
Oh, my wife is a most knowing woman.

Yes, I must give all of my friends up  
If I would live happy and quiet;  
One might as well be 'neath a tombstone  
As live in confusion and riot.  
This life we all know is a short one,  
While some tongues are long, heaven knows,  
And a miserable life is a husband's  
Who numbers his wife with his foes;  
I'll stay at home now like a true man,  
Oh, my wife is a most knowing woman.

Stephen C. Foster

# Oh! Susanna

1 I came from Alabama  
2 wid my ban jo on my knee,  
3 I'm g'wan to Louisiana,  
4 My true love for to see,  
6 It rained all night the day I left  
7 The weather it was dry,  
8 The sun so hot I froze to death  
9 Susanna dont you cry.

10 [Chorus] Oh! Susanna Oh! dont you cry for me  
11 I've come from Alabama wid mi ban jo on my knee.

12 [Solo] I jumped aboard de telegraph,  
13 And trabelled down de riber,  
14 De Lectric fluid magnified,  
15 And Killed five Hundred Nigger  
16 De bullgine buste, de horse run off,  
17 I realy thought I'd die;  
18 I shut my eyes to hold my breath,  
19 Susana, dont you cry.

20 [Chorus] Oh! Susana Oh! dont you cry for me  
21 I've come from Alabama wid mi ban jo on my knee.

22 [Solo] I had a dream de odder night,  
23 When ebery ting was still;  
24 I thought I saw Susana,  
25 A coming down de hill.  
26 The buckwheat cake war in her mouth,  
27 The tear was in her eye,  
28 Says I, im coming from de South,  
29 Susana, dont you cry.

30 [Chorus] Oh! Susana Oh! dont you cry for me  
31 I've come from Alabama wid mi ban jo on my knee.

32 [Solo] I soon will be in New Orleans,  
33 And den I'll look all round,  
34 And when I find Susana,

35 I'll fall upon the ground.  
36 But if I do not find her,  
37 Dis darkie 'l surely die,  
38 And when I'm dead and buried,  
39 Susana, dont you cry.

40 [Chorus] Oh! Susana Oh! dont you cry for me  
41 I've come from Alabama wid mi ban jo on my knee.

Stephen C. Foster



# Old Black Joe

- 1 Gone are the days when my heart was young and gay,
- 2 Gone are my friends from the cotton fields away,
- 3 Gone from the earth to a better land I know,
- 4 I hear their gentle voices calling 'Old Black Joe.'
  
- 5 [Chorus] I'm coming, I'm coming, for my head is bending low:
- 6 I hear those gentle voices calling, 'Old Black Joe.'
  
- 7 [Solo] Why do I weep when my heart should feel no pain
- 8 Why do I sigh that my friends come not again,
- 9 Grieving for forms Now departed long a go?
- 10 I hear their gentle voices calling 'Old Black Joe.'
  
- 11 [Chorus] I'm coming, I'm coming, for my head is bending low:
- 12 I hear those gentle voices calling, 'Old Black Joe.'
  
- 13 [Solo] Where are the hearts once so happy and so free?
- 14 The children so dear that I held upon my knee,
- 15 Gone to the shore where my soul has longed to go.
- 16 I hear their gentle voices calling 'Old Black Joe.'
  
- 17 [Chorus] I'm coming, I'm coming, for my head is bending low:
- 18 I hear those gentle voices calling, 'Old Black Joe.'

Stephen C. Foster

# Old Dog Tray

THE morn of life is past,  
And ev'ning comes at last;  
It brings me a dream of a once happy day,  
Of merry forms I've seen  
Upon the village green,  
Sporting with my old dog Tray.

Chorus: Old dog Tray's ever faithful; Grief cannot drive him away; He's gentle,  
he is kind, I'll never, never find A better friend than old dog Tray.

The forms I called my own  
Have vanish'd one by one,  
The lov'd ones, the dear ones have all pass'd away;  
Their happy smiles have flown,  
Their gentle voices gone,  
I've nothing left but old dog Tray.  
Chorus.

When thoughts recall the past,  
His eyes are on me cast,  
I know that he feels what my breaking heart would say;  
Although he cannot speak,  
I'll vainly, vainly seek  
A better friend than old dog Tray.  
Chorus.

Stephen C. Foster

# Old Folks At Home

1 Way down upon de Swanee ribber,  
2 Far, far away,  
3 Dere's wha my heart is turning ebber,  
4 Dere's wha de old folks stay.  
5 All up and down de whole creation,  
6 Sadly I roam,  
7 Still longing for de old plantation,  
8 And for de old folks at home.

9 [Chorus] All de world am sad and dreary,  
10 Ebry where I roam,  
11 Oh! darkeys how my heart grows weary,  
12 Far from de old folks at home.

13 [Solo] All round de little farm I wandered  
14 When I was young,  
15 Den many happy days I squandered,  
16 Many de songs I sung.  
17 When I was playing wid my brudder  
18 Happy was I --.  
19 Oh! take me to my kind old mudder,  
20 Dere let me live and die.

21 [Chorus] All de world am sad and dreary,  
22 Ebry where I roam,  
23 Oh! darkeys how my heart grows weary,  
24 Far from de old folks at home.

25 One little hut among de bushes,  
26 One dat I love,  
27 Still sadly to my mem'ry rushes,  
28 No matter where I rove  
29 When will I see de bees a humming  
30 All round de comb?  
31 When will I hear de banjo tumming  
32 Down in my good old home?

33 [Chorus] All de world am sad and dreary,  
34 Ebry where I roam,

35 Oh! darkeys how my heart grows weary,  
36 Far from de old folks at home

Stephen C. Foster

# Ring Ring The Banjo

De time is nebber dreary if de darkey nebber groans;  
De ladies nebber weary wid de rattle of de bones:  
Den come again Susanna by de gaslight ob de moon;  
We'll tum de old Piano when de banjo's out ob tune.

Chorus:

Ring, ring de banjo! I like dat good old song,  
Come again my true lub, Oh! wha you been so long?

Stephen C. Foster

# The Glendy Burk

De  
Glendy Burk  
is mighty fast boat,  
Wid a mighty fast captain too;  
He sits up dah on de hurricane roof  
And he keeps his eye on de crew.  
I can't stay here, for dey work too hard;  
I'm bound to leave dis town;  
I'll take my duds and tote 'em on my back  
When de  
Glendy Burk  
comes down.

Chorus:

Ho! for Lou'siana!  
I'm bound to leave dis town;  
I'll take my duds and tote 'em on my back  
When de Glendy Burk comes down.

De  
Glendy Burk  
has a funny old crew  
And dey sing de boatman's song,  
Dey burn de pitch and de pine knot too,  
For to shove de boat along.  
De smoke goes up and de ingine roars  
And de wheel goes round and round,  
So fair you well! for I'll take a little ride  
When de  
Glendy Burk  
comes down.

Chorus

I'll work all night in de wind and storm,  
I'll work all day in de rain,

'Till I find myself on de levydock  
In New Orleans again.  
Dey make me mow in de hay field here  
And knock my head wid de flail,  
I'll go wha dey work wid de sugar and de cane  
And roll on de cotten bale.

Chorus

My lady love is as pretty as a pink,  
I'll meet her on de way  
I'll take her back to de sunny old south  
And day I'll make her stay  
So don't you fret my honey dear,  
Oh! don't you fret, Miss Brown  
I'll take you back 'fore de middle of de week  
When de  
Glendy Burk  
comes down.

Chorus

Stephen C. Foster