

The Book of the Native

The father's mouth was white and stern,
But his eyes grew tender with long farewell.
He said: "Hold fast to your seat, Sweetheart,
And ride Old Jerry well!

"I must go back. Ride on to the river.
Over the ford and the long marsh ride,
Straight on to the town. And I'll meet you,
Sweetheart,
Somewhere on the other side."

He slipped from the saddle. The boy rode on.
His hand clung fast in the horse's mane;
His hair blew over the horse's neck;
His small throat sobbed with pain.