

Bleeding and drenched—by toil and sorrow bent—
Back to what used to be my home I went,
But, as I neared our little clearing ground—
Listen!—I heard the cow-bell's tinkling sound;
The cabin door was just a bit ajar;
It gleamed upon my glad eyes like a star!
"Brave heart," I said "for such a fragile form!
She made them guide her homeward through the storm!"
Such pangs of joy I never felt before:
"You've come!" I shouted, and rushed through the door.

Yes she had come—and gone again.—She lay
With all her young life crushed and wrenched away—
Lay—the heart-ruins of our home among—
Not far from where I killed her with my tongue.
The rain drops glittered 'mid her hair's long strands,
The forest-thorns had torn her feet and hands,
And 'midst the tears—brave tears—that one could trace
Upon the pale but sweetly resolute face,
I once again the mournful words could read—
"I've tried to do my best—I have, indeed."

And now I'm mostly done; my story's o'er;
Part of it never breathed the air before.
'Tisn't over-usual, it must be allowed,
To volunteer heart-history to a crowd,
And scatter 'mongst them confidential tears,
But you'll protect an old man with his years;
And whoso'er this story's voice can reach,
This is the sermon I would have it preach:

Boys flying kites haul in their white-winged birds;
You can't do that way when you're flying words.
"Careful with fire," is good advice, we know:
"Careful with words," is ten times doubly so.
Thoughts unexpressed may sometimes fall back dead;
But God himself can't kill them when they're said!