

Come Up from the Fields Father

*Come up from the fields father, here's a letter from our
Pete,*

*And come to the front door mother, here's a letter from thy
dear son.*

*Lo, 'tis autumn,
Lo, where the trees, deeper green, yellower and redder,
Cool and sweeten Ohio's villages with leaves fluttering in
the*

*moderate wind,
Where apples ripe in the orchards hang and grapes on the
trellis'd vines,*

*(Smell you the smell of the grapes on the vines?
Smell you the buckwheat where the bees were lately
buzzing?)*

*Above all, lo, the sky so calm, so transparent after the
rain, and*

*with wondrous clouds,
Below too, all calm, all vital and beautiful, and the farm
prosperes well.*

*Down in the fields all prosperes well,
But now from the fields come father, come at the daughter's
call.*

*And come to the entry mother, to the front door come right
away.*

*Fast as she can she hurries, something ominous, her steps
trembling,*

She does not tarry to smooth her hair nor adjust her cap.

*Open the envelope quickly,
O this is not our son's writing, yet his name is sign'd,
O a strange hand writes for our dear son, O stricken
mother's soul!*

*All swims before her eyes, flashes with black, she catches
the main*

*words only,
Sentences broken, gunshot wound in the breast, cavalry
skirmish,*

*taken to hospital,
At present low, but will soon be better.*

*Ah now the single figure to me,
Amid all teeming and wealthy Ohio with all its cities and
farms,*

*Sickly white in the face and dull in the head, very faint,
By the jamb of a door leans.*

Grieve not so, dear mother, (the just-grown daughter speaks
through

her sobs,

The little sisters huddle around speechless and dismay'd,)
See, dearest mother, the letter says Pete will soon be
better.

Alas poor boy, he will never be better, (nor may-be needs
to be

better, that brave and simple soul,)

While they stand at home at the door he is dead already,
The only son is dead.

But the mother needs to be better,

She with thin form presently drest in black,

By day her meals untouch'd, then at night fitfully
sleeping, often waking,

In the midnight waking, weeping, longing with one deep
longing,

O that she might withdraw unnoticed, silent from life
escape and withdraw,

To follow, to seek, to be with her dear dead son.