

Ken

## DAISY

DAISY: Well, I'll say "The Soldier's Letter."

KEN: Okay, what is the soldier's letter.

DAISY: The soldier went to war, one of our Grafton boys, they lived right at the foot of the hill.

1. Dear Madam, I am a soldier,  
And my speech is rough and plain,  
I'm not much used to writing,  
And I hate to give you pain,  
But I promised I would do it,  
And he thought it might be so,  
If it came from one that loved him  
Perhaps it would ease the blow.  
By this time you must surely guess  
The truth I feign would hide,  
And you pardon me for rough soldier words,  
While I tell you how he died.

2. It was the night before the battle,  
And in our crowded tent,  
More than one brave boy was sobbing,  
And every knee was bent.  
For we knew not on the morrow,  
When its bloody work was done,  
How many of us that was kneeling there,  
Would see the setting sun.  
'Twas not so much for self we cared,  
As for the loved at home,  
For its always worse to think of,  
Than to hear the cannons boom.  
It was then we left the crowded tent  
Your soldier boy and I,  
And we both breathed freer standing  
Underneath the clear blue sky.  
I was more than ten years older  
But he seemed to take to me  
And more often than the younger ones  
He sought my company  
He seemed to want to talk of his home  
And those that he held dear  
While I had none to talk of  
But I always liked to hear.  
So he told me of the night  
And then time he came away  
And how you sorely grieved for him,  
But you didn't bid him stay.  
And how his own fond hope had been  
That when this war was through,  
He might go back with honor  
To his home, to his friends, and you.  
It seems so hard that one so loved

As he was should be gone,  
While I should still be living here  
That has no friends at home.

3. It was in the morrow's battle  
Fast rained the shot and shell,  
I was standing close beside,  
And I saw him when huge fell.  
And so I took him in my arms,  
And laid him in the grass.  
It was going against orders,  
But I think they let it pass.  
'Twas a minie ball that struck him,  
It entered at his side,  
But I didn't think it fatal,  
Til this morning, when he died.

4. "Last night I wanted so to live,  
I seemed so young to go,  
Last week I passed my birthday,  
I was just nineteen, you know.  
When I thought of all I'd planned to do,  
It seemed so hard to die,  
But now I've prayed to God for grace  
And all my care's gone by."  
And here his voice grew weaker,  
As he proudly raised his head,  
And whispered, "Goodbye, Mother,"  
And your soldier boy was dead.

I wrapped his cloak around him  
To ??? the night,  
And laid him among a clump of trees,  
Where the moon was shining bright.

5. I carved him out a headboard  
As skillful as I could,  
And if you wish to find it,  
I can tell you where it stood.  
I send you back his hymn book,  
The cap he used to wear,  
And a lock I cut the night before  
Of his bright curly hair  
I send you back his Bible;  
The night before he died  
I turned its leaves together,  
And read it by his side.  
I'll keep the belt he was wearing,  
He told me so do,  
It had a hole upon the side  
Just where the ball went through.  
So now I've done his bidding,  
There's nothing more to tell,  
But I'll shall always mourn with you

The boy we loved so well.

That was one of the Palmer boys, that lives right up the foot of our hill, when you go up our hill.

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Proud? Well, he couldn't do nothing else but try to get free, and run away. And here's his young missus had helped him from the time he was five years old, when he burned up ?..

And so papa couldn't read, he never had no schooling, and my mother never had no schooling except for what my father taught her, but my father was very smart. You know, you all don't know it here, but they didn't have no clothes, they had to go barefoot and everything. Those were the terriblest four years the world has ever known.

The war was just over and all of the soldiers were going home, and my father had been part of the 1st New Jersey Cavalry, and they was quartered on the edge of Washington, waiting to get their papers so they could come home from the war. Because they didn't have no where to go, and Lincoln had made out a paper so that Papa could come back and forth, and find a place for the colored soliders to come back up here.

Yeah I said that the green shroud, the green grass in Virginia was fertile with the blood of the negro slaves from Africa and these white boys and white men that laid their all on the altar so that we could have our freedom, so that we could be free like everybody else.

Well of course he was a slave, he wanted to be free, so he was doing everything that he could to help Lincoln and to help the soldier. It was a terrible time.

#### MASSA'S IN THE COLD, COLD GROUND

Round the meadows came aringing,  
The darkies mournful song,  
All the darkies am weeping,  
Massas in the cold, cold ground.

It's hard to hear old massa calling  
Because he was so weak and old,  
Now when the summer days are coming,  
Massas never call no more.

Oh, the white people had a hard time down there. The white slaves men were having children by them negro slave women, their wives didn't like it, and then they have all these young sons that was their own sons, and they were slaves of those negro women, and they were smart, and the father didn't know what to do.

And so it was, something had to break, somebody had to stand on their feet and be head and do the right thing. And everybody, there wasn't any of them doing right. And of course the white slave men wanted to make good money fast by having the negro slave men work free, they thought that was a good way for them quick money, don't you see.

Lincoln had the two goose pens, where he signed the paper, for '62 and '63 for our freedom. The war was still going on, but he signed the paper with the pen so that, that was when he saw that he wasn't going to win the war unless the negro slaves helped. Because old Jeff Davis had called in the southern men to help, and they was winning, and they said they was going to have slavery. And Lincoln said that they would fight.

It couldn't be any worse dear, I just keep trying to tell you. Can anything be any worse than when a white man was having children by the negro slave women, and then putting them up for sale on the block? They wanted to sell my father for a breeder for twelve thousand dollars when he was twelve years old. Old Goulden, John Goulden, he was the rich planter, he wouldn't sell him for that.

First New Jersey Calvary, when he ran away, my father was on the plantation working for his master. And he and twenty-seven other boys ran away, and swum across the Rapahannock River and joined the first New Jersey Cavalry... in the war.

I don't think that, my father used to sing, my father had a beautiful tenor voice, he used to sing, different slave songs.

Nellie Grey.

There's a low green valley,  
On the old Kentucky shore,  
Where I toiled many happy hours away,  
Why sitting and singing by the little cabin door,  
Where I went to see Nellie Grey.  
One night I went to see her,  
She'd gone the neighbor say,  
That a white man came,  
And he bound her with his chains.  
While I toiled on the old Kentucky shore.

We had a lot of the slaves chained. Why yes there's a man and a woman now in freedom. Before that they couldn't talk, they wouldn't all you to sit down on the same train, you couldn't go to the hospital, you could go to the library, or anything, you didn't have no freedom.