

The Grandfather Story

One Autumn month I took my gun
And hunted me for a day of chance
Among the feathered fowls that swim
On the mill-pond in negligence
And there I lingered through the sun
Unaware that day was thusly done
And twilight, marching in advance
Left me with night too long before
I reached my distant cottage door

My path led near a mansion hotel
And over it waved some stately trees
It paused one moment to behold
The moon-beams dancing through their leaves
A merry voice broke on my ear
So sweet or plaintive and so near
I durst not stir nor hardly breathe
And there I heard a tale of strife
Of love of hope a shattered life

Beneath those trees the shadows sweep
Where plays the Zephyr of the night
Nature's no Angels guarding sleep
So listless in their misty delight
And here a sound my ear deceives
No thought to sweet for human voice
Though near night, muffled to my sight
It said Grandfather, will you please
Tell a story - I will not leave

An old man said my darling child
As long ago as I can tell
There was a big strong, gay and wild
He nevertheless was kind and bold
His roguish ways did not escape
The vengeance of a father's hand
Which in this tale shall not be told.
I would not that thy guileless heart
Were wounded with the cruel part

His last brothers and sisters too
I wish that you had Emma dear
About this child and falling dew
Is gathering fast upon us here
It is not wisdom thus to stay
And soon the seed of lips decay
Whose hopelessness might laugh at fear
And though I pray, through life long blast
Of all my hopes, you are the best

That father be a blazing fire
Set in his easy chair one night
The little ones all aspire
To win a favor in his sight
And all succeed well, but one
And him of course the next must shun
Though he has done with all his might
To be as good and lovelier as they
Was scorned and driven from the play

This little paper would oft revive
In dreams of sunny days to come
His mother, then was still alive
The only thing he yet had known
And when the father's angry voice
Forbade his young heart to rejoice
He sought his mother, she alone
Would lift his throbbing heart to state
In soothing accents to her will

When he was born his father gave
The name of Charles unto his son
I gave him over a clear friend's grace
Whome he wished to honor and to save
But since I had learned to hate that name
A father, what man could do the same
And hate a child, much more his own
To vent his hate in low mean sneers
And feast his eyes on infant tears

No tongue can tell no pen can mark
One shadow of that helpless gloom
Which saw that mother's form depart
Forever to the silent tomb
The mother's anguish of his grief
And sympathies might seek relief
And only find himself alone
With selfish work all aforesaid
Behind her door and closed the door