

Farewell to Nova Scotia

An adaptation of the 1791 Scottish folk song "The Soldier's Adieu", printed in 1803 in a Glasgow newspaper and attributed to Robert Tannahill. When the song began to be adapted by Nova Scotians is unknown. In the 1930s, folklorist Helen Creighton collected versions of the song from different communities along the eastern shore of Nova Scotia.

<Start with Chorus>

Farewell to Nova Scotia, the sea-bound coast,
let your mountains dark and dreary be.
for when I am far away on the briny ocean tossed,
Will you ever heave a sigh or a wish for me?

The sun was setting in the west,
The birds were singing on every tree.
All nature seemed inclined to rest
But still there was no rest for me.
Chorus <without solo on first line>

I grieve to leave my native land,
I grieve to leave my comrades all,
And my aging parents whom I've always loved
And the bonnie, bonnie lass that I do adore.
Chorus <without solo on first line>

The drums they do beat and the wars do alarm,
The captain calls, I must obey.
So farewell, farewell to Nova Scotia's charms,
For it's early in the morning and I'm far, far away.
Chorus <without solo on first line>

I have three brothers and they are at rest,
Their arms are folded on their chest.
But a poor simple sailor just like me,
Must be tossed and turned in the deep dark sea.
Chorus x2 <without solo on first line>