

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. Roud 384.

<Start with Chorus - first line sung solo>
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? <no slow>

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> <no slow on last 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> <no slow on last 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> <no slow on last 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 <no solo> <slow on last line of 2nd chorus>