

# Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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## Henry Joy McCracken

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(attributed, variously, to PJ McCall, T.P. Cuming, and the ever-prolific Ann O'Nymous)

It was on a Beslfast mountain I heard a maid complain  
And she vexed the sweet June evening with her heartbroken strain,  
Saying, "Woe is me, life's anguish is more than I can dream,  
Since Henry Joy McCracken died on the gallows tree.

"At Donegore he proudly rode and he wore a suit of green,  
And brave though vain at Antrim his sword flashed lightning keen,  
And when by spies surrounded his band to Slemish fled,  
He came unto the Cavehill for to rest a weary head.

"I watched for him each night long as in our cot he slept,  
At daybreak through the heather to MacArt's fort we crept,  
When news came from Greencastle of a good ship anchored nigh,  
And down by yon wee fountain we met to say good-bye.

"He said, 'My love, be cheerful, for tears and fears are vain.'  
He said, 'My love, be hopeful our land shall rise again.'  
He kissed me very fondly, he kissed me three times o'er,  
Saying, 'Death shall never part us, my love for evermore.'

"That night I climbed the Cavehill and watched till morning blazed,  
And when its fires had kindled, across the loch I gazed,  
I saw an English tender had anchored off Garmoyle,  
But alas! no good ship bore him away, onto France's soil.

"And twice that night a tramping came from the old shore road.  
'Twas Ellis and his yeomen, false Niblock with them strode.  
My father home returning the doleful story told,  
'Alas,' he said, 'young Harry Joy for fifty pounds is sold.'"

"And is it true," I asked her. "Yes, it's true," she said.  
"For to this heart that loved him, I pressed his gorey head.  
And every night, still bleeding, his ghost comes to my side.  
My Harry, my dead Harry, comes to his promised bride."

Now on that Belfast mountain, this fair maid's voice is still,  
For in a grave they laid her high on Carmoney Hill.  
And the sad waves beneath her chant requiem for the dead.  
The rebel winds shriek freedom above her weary head.

Note: The "fair maid" is most likely Mary Bodle, the mother of McCracken's child.

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