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Evangeline

by Peter Doerfert

I met a man crippled by war

He was old, disfigured, and poor.

A well-aimed bullet did find its way

Into his leg where it did stay.

His bride to be whose ring he wore

Promised to love him forever more.

After years had passed and their love had grown,

She died in winter, and he was alone.

Said the old man,

Tell her you love her as you walk out the door.

Tell her you love her as you're returning to war.

Tell her you need her knowing not what's in store.

Tell her you'll love her forever more.

Said I,

A hundred thoughts left unspoken

A hundred things left undone

A thousand conflicted moments

Another battle begun.

I miss Evangeline with eyes of sapphire

Her laugh and her heart are my desire.

We walked in silence, we walked in the sun

Precious were the moments when we walked one by one.

The drums kept rhythm
 The cannons kept beat
Thick smoke on the battlefield
 Soldiers fell at my feet.
A short salute to the fallen with my gun in my hand
 I returned to battle to advance for more land.
The President spoke for those who died in dedication
 That they did not die in vain for they made a great nation.

I returned home to greet her, but she was no more
 She died while in Gettysburg, a casualty of war.
A group of civilians were caught in the fray
 They couldn't escape the fire that day.
My knees became weak, and my soul it did chill
 Midst the shadows of life I forgot how to feel.
I walked in silence, I walked in the sun
 No more precious moments, I walked as one.

A blacksmith in Denver all of these years
 Fire and steel dry away tears.
A young cowboy asked what I did in the war
 I fought in Gettysburg and a few battles more.
I remember a crowd in Gettysburg one day
 They were caught and couldn't get out of the fray.
I didn't know my love was part of the crowd
 The fires and explosions and drums were too loud.

Said the young cowboy,
My grandma's best friend died in that fire
 The name was Evangeline with eyes of sapphire.
Her traveling choir fed the hungry and poor
 As well as soldiers injured in war.
Her choir grew quickly, and the money poured in
 T'was a travelin' miracle then others joined in.
Your bride died quickly; because of her, many lived.
 Her heart of gold was made to give.

Said I,
I've not much wisdom for a young man like you
 But to follow your heart for the Red, White, and Blue.
I fought my battles for your young generation
 Then prayed to God for my salvation.
A man can only do what a man can do
 Just know that God's grace is following you.
Choose your battles before your battles choose you,
 And teach your children to stand for the Red, White, and Blue.