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Letter from John Sprockett to Sophia Starling, Early 1876

by Robert Cooperman

Dear Miss Starling,
Now that you're marrying a doctor
I can't call you Sophie.
By the time you get this,
you'll be vowed and kissed
and maybe a bun in your belly.
If your high-minded physician
ever mistreats you, just send word
and there'll be one less
gentleman-bully in the world.
But I suspect you can handle him,
like you soothed me when the need
for a drink crawled like a scorpion
and only your lullabies—
about England's green meadows
that I still can't believe in,
knowing only mountain, plain, and desert—
could pry that stinging devil loose.

Should I ever get far enough ahead,
I'll see for myself if you sang true.
Don't fret, I won't descend
like a buzzard in buckskins.
Anyway, I wish you only good.
Here's a gift to prove it,
and if he ever offers you trouble,
remember what I said about a favor
from an old friend.
I remain true and trustworthy,
believing you to be the one blessing
in my life of rot-gut and six-guns.

