

**Rock Me to Sleep Mother, Then.**

The following beautiful poem was written by Major J. F. Simmons, editor of the Southern Reporter, who never knew a mother's love and who is now past three score and ten:

I ask not that time should turn back in its flight,  
And make me a boy again e'en for a night;  
My childhood, my boyhood, early manhood are all  
Long passed, nor would I those seasons recall;  
Of life's transient pleasures I've had my full share,  
Perhaps, too, my quota of trouble and care.  
In lengthened experience together they blend,  
And now I am nearing my long journey's end,  
Yet motherly hand never rocked me to sleep,  
Nor shielded from ills that around me would sweep.  
If Time should turn backward or pause in his flight,  
And make me a boy again e'en for a night,  
I know I'd feel sorely, what I did not feel when  
The morning of childhood was passing, for then,  
I knew not the value of what I had lost—  
That which helpless infancy always needs most.  
And no earthly blessing can be valued above—  
A gentle, affectionate and fond mother's love.  
For mother's soft song never lulled me to sleep,  
Nor soothed when trouble would over me sweep.  
No love is so constant, unselfish and true.  
Yet I, alas! never a mother's love knew.  
My mother, they told me, was gentle and fair,  
Fit for only Heaven and God took her there;  
He looked on her lovingly, saw she was good,  
And took her away in her young womanhood;  
He took her away at my life's early dawn,  
When only a few infant breaths I had drawn;  
And mother of mine never rocked to sleep,  
Or lavished upon me love sacred and deep.  
I felt not, I knew not, in infantine years,  
A mother's fond kiss or a mother's warm tears,  
And often, when burdened with childhood's distress,  
My sore heart has yearned for a mother's caress,  
And often too, when fever, like molten lead burned  
Through all my young frame, I despairingly turned  
To gentle ones 'round me, who never knew how  
I longed for a mother's soft hand on my brow,  
But when I felt drowsiness over me creep,  
No mother was near me to rock me to sleep.  
The trials and ills that in childhood were mine,  
And often have caused me for solace to pine,  
Brought floods of warm tears which I could not restrain  
Yet no relief gave me, and all were in vain;  
Then why should I ask time to turn back or pause  
And make me a boy again simply because  
I'm nearing the end of my long journey now,  
And snow is where raven locks covered my brow?  
No fond mother's hand would then rock me to sleep,  
And sadly would I in my loneliness weep.  
Perhaps should Time pause or turn back in his flight,  
And make me a boy again e'en for a night,  
Unwelcomed memories would crowd on my brain,  
And make me unhappy and hopeless again.  
I should not the smiles of a dear mother see,  
For these in my childhood never beamed on me;  
I should not a mother's soft lullaby hear,  
For music like this never fell on my ear.  
No mother would sit night to rock me to sleep,  
And over me fond gentle vigil to keep.  
No, turn ye not backward, old Time, in your flight,  
To make me a child again e'en for a night.  
I ask not return of these long vanished years,  
Their pleasures, their sorrows, their smiles and their tears.  
They're all in the past now, there let them remain,  
Nor relegate me back to boyhood again.  
My long toilsome journey is now near its end,  
And there may contentment and peace sweetly blend.  
Then Mother, dear Mother,  
When storms cease to sweep,  
Smile lovingly on me and rock me to sleep.

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