

NOT LOST, BUT GONE BEFORE

How mournful seems, in broken dreams,
The memory of the day,
When icy Death hath sealed the breath
Of some dear form of clay.

When pale, unmoved, the face we loved,
The face we thought so fair,
And the hand lies cold, whose fervent hold
Once charmed away despair.

Oh, what could heal the grief we feel
For hopes that come no more,
Had we ne'er heard the Scripture word,
"Not lost, but gone before."

Oh sadly yet with vain regret
The widowed heart must yearn;
And mothers weep their babes asleep
In the sunlight's vain return.

The brother's heart shall rue to part
From the one through childhood known;
And the orphan's tears lament for years
A friend and father gone.

For death and life, with ceaseless strife,
Beat wild on this world's shore,
And all our calm is in that balm,
"Not lost, but gone before."

Oh! world wherein nor death, nor sin,
Nor weary warfare dwells;
Their blessed home we parted from
With sobs and sad farewells.

Where eyes awake, for whose dear sake
Our own with tears grow dim,
And faint accords of dying words
Are changed for heaven's sweet hymn;

Oh! there at last, life's trials past,
We'll meet our loved once more,
Whose feet have trod the path to God--
"Not lost, but gone before."

--Hon. Caroline Elizabeth Norton