

## Translation of “Et Afskedsquad til Emigranter til Amerika,” 1853

A Farewell Ode to Emigrants on Their Journey to America.

Mel. Bertram’s Farewell Ode to France.<sup>1</sup>

1.

You are going away to maybe never no more  
Norway see, your homeland behold.  
O that all that you here bitterly must manage without,  
you in that distant safe harbor will get tenfold back.  
In America’s valleys abounding with flowers,  
where the earth does not mock the sweat of its grower,  
on your journey there we pray that God  
will look down upon your wandering with blessings!

2.

The hand of the Father then loyally accompany you  
on your journey across the ocean blue!  
And lead you in your future days,  
preventing fever, pestilence and bad luck from reaching you;  
no snake bites, or vermin there approaching  
where you build your peaceful abode,  
No harm from the wild! – Our Father gently protect  
you all! – Healthy, strong and happy be.

3.

And God who is the guardian of innocence,  
his eyes will keep vigil over your small ones;  
no storm, nor fire will destroy your huts,  
and you will not suffer from livelihood’s bitter sorrows!  
Yes, O that you will by Sabina’s beautiful beaches  
get to watch the wonderful fruits of your toil and sweat!  
“We Norwegians are,” that thought should uplift you,  
when you find the day oppressive and hot.

4.

When longing for home weighs down on your soul,

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1. The verses were intended to be sung to what was probably a well-known melody, “Bertram’s Farewell Ode to France,” possibly “Gen. Bertrand’s Afskedsquad til Frankrig.”

then think: “our right home country is the place  
where we actually get paid for all our hard labor,  
where hunger dare not approach us,  
moreover there is more of God’s wonderful sky here  
than out North, our home country of yore,  
and the top soil is fertile, all nature’s abundance  
is rich in its diversity, that cannot be denied.”

5.

When you in a better home country stand,  
don’t forget your friends in the cold North,  
that will never on your coast land;  
but trudge heavily on Norway’s barren soil.  
Send them a letter, a penny with a picture of freedom  
so they with affection can stare at it,  
on the ideal they can imagine,  
in helmet and armor joyfully standing strong.

6.

To those left behind here in Norway’s valleys  
write many a true and loving word,  
for them it will soothe the pain of yearning  
and create desire to leave the North  
where brave women, children and men only are provided  
scorn and shame, destitution and poverty.  
You have it better then, when you speak,  
when you beckon them to come where you went.

7.

In never ending struggle like brothers together you should  
as worthy is for men from the old North  
fight manly under song and joy  
to provide your family with bread and fertile soil.  
Thankful to God you spend your days  
on what is honorable and right; –  
there is progress – it only regresses  
when your actions are lowly and bad.

8.

My friend, I wish you a Yankee daughter  
as wife, – beautiful and rich she must be,

and virtuous, – one who there will be a good replacement  
for the women that you here could not get,  
that there in quiet clean and domestic joy  
you truly can enjoy the best dream of your youth  
what fate here would not provide you  
is wonderfully given to you at Sabina's stream!

9.

And in a thousand years after the North will be deserted  
and the Norwegian's offspring by the banks of Missouri  
will behold freedom's beautiful red sunrise  
shining there in wealth, light and peace,  
then forgotten will be the yearning and hardship and miserable days,  
in the Norwegians' new and happy home! –  
Farewell, farewell! and the Lord be with you  
on your way wherever you head forth.

10.

Thanks for your good company here! Do know from me  
my wishes and warm prayers to God  
hopefully not in vain I am raising  
for your wellbeing: O for the young strong sprouts  
of Norwegian stock in America to progress  
to the delight and luck of father and mother  
and all good! Salvation you will enjoy  
when you one day leave this earth!

11.

As belief is best shown in the man's deed,  
that the one who always acts right and well,  
is dearest to God, therefore also should be praised  
that freedom of spirit, that for happiness and luck  
to all, in America must prevail;  
there a man is not asked about his belief,  
to each one fairly life's mystery is solved  
he enjoys the waning moments of his life into death with calm.

Hamar 1853.

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