

## Lemuel Haynes's Poem "The Battle of Lexington," 1775

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[Excerpts]

1

Some Seraph now my Breast inspire  
whilst my *Urania* sings  
while She would try her solemn Lyre  
Upon poetic Strings.

2

Some gloomy Vale or gloomy Seat  
where Sable veils the sky  
Become that Tongue that w<sup>d</sup> repeat  
The dreadful Tragedy

3

The Nineteenth Day of April last  
We ever shall retain  
As monumental of the past  
most bloody shocking Scene

4

*Then* Tyrants fill'd w<sup>th</sup> horrid Rage  
A fatal Journey went  
& Unmolested to engage  
And slay the innocent

5

*Then* did we see old *Bonner* rise  
And, borrowing Spite from Hell  
They stride along with magic Eyes  
where Sons of Freedom dwell

6

At *Lexington* they did appear  
Array'd in hostile Form  
And tho our Friends were peacefull there  
Yet on them fell the Storm

7

Eight most unhappy Victims fell  
Into the Arms of Death  
unpited by those Tribes of Hell  
who curs'd them w<sup>th</sup> their Breath

8

The Savage Band still march along  
For *Concord* they were bound  
while Oaths & Curses from their Tongue  
Accent with hellish Sound

9

To prosecute their fell Desire  
At *Concord* they unite  
Two Sons of Freedom there expire  
By their tyrannic Spite

10

Thus did our Friends endure their Rage  
without a murm'ring Word  
Till die they must or else engage  
and join with one Accord

11

Such Pity did their Breath inspire  
That long they bore the Rod  
And with Reluctance they conspire  
to shed the human Blood

12

But Pity could no longer sway  
Tho' 't is a pow'rfull Band  
For Liberty now bleeding lay  
And call'd them to withstand

13

The Awfull Conflict now begun  
To rage with furious Pride  
And Blood in great Effusion run  
From many a wounded Side

14

For Liberty, each Freeman Strives  
As its a Gift of God  
And for it willing yield their Lives  
And Seal it with their Blood

15

Thrice happy they who thus resign  
Into the peacefull Grave  
Much better there, in Death Confin'd  
Than a Surviving Slave

16

This Motto may adorn their Tombs,  
(Let tyrants come and view)  
*“We rather seek these silent Rooms  
Than live as Slaves to You”*

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Transcript Source: Lemuel Haynes, “The Battle of Lexington” (wr. 1775), printed in Ruth Bogin, “‘The Battle of Lexington’: A Patriotic Ballad by Lemuel Haynes,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (October 1985), pp. 501-504.