The Dying Ranger

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Now, a group had gathered round him, comrades with him in the fight
And a tear fell down each manly cheek as they bade him last goodnight
One kind friend and companion was kneeling by his side,
Striving to quench his life's blood, but alas, in vain he tried.

His heart filled with deep anguish as he saw 'twas all in vain
And upon his loved companion the tears fell down like rain
When up spoke the dying soldier, saying, "Harry, weep no more for me
I am crossing the dark river, beyond where all are free.

"Listen, comrades, gather round me; I have something I would say,
I have something I would tell you ere my soul has passed away.
Far away in loved New England, 'neath that dear old home estate
Lives one who awaits my coming, with a saddened beart doth wait.

"Now, a fair young girl, my sister, my blessing and my pride
My early care from childhood; I had none else beside.
I've no mother; she is sleeping beneath the churchyard sod.
It's been many, many years since her spirit went to God.

"I've no father; he is sleeping beneath the cold, dark sea.
I've no brothers, I've no kindred, there was only Nell and me.
I have loved ber with a brother's love and with a father's care
I have strove from grief and sorrow her tender heart to spare.

"When our country wasd invaded and they called for volunteers,
She threw her arms around me, and bursting into tears,
Saying, "Go, my darling brother, drive the traitors from our shore
My heart it craves thy presence, yet thy country needs thee more.

"My heart seems almost breakin@, but I would not bid thee stay
But here in our old homestead, I will watch (I'll watch for thee?)the day
by day,
Now, my comrades, I am dying and I ne'er shall see her more
She will vainly wait my coming at our little cottage door.

"Listen, comrades, gather round me, listen to my dying prayer
Who will shield her with a brother's love and with a father's care?
Then the soldiers spoke together, like one voice it seemed to fall
"She shall be to us a sister! We'll protect her, one and all."

One smile of radiant brightness and away his life's blood ebbed
One good-by for his sister and the soldier boy was dead.
On the banks of the Potomac they have laid him down to rest
With his knapsack for a pillow and his gun upon his breast.

note: Sung on the southern side, with slight adaptations, as the Dying Ranger.
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