

Like Brothers We Meet

By George Moses Horton

Dedicated to the Federal and Late Confederate Soldiers

Like heart-loving brothers we meet,
And still the loud thunders of strife,
The blaze of fraternity kindles most sweet,
There's nothing more pleasing in life.

The black cloud of faction retreats,
The poor is no longer depressed,
See those once discarded resuming their seats,
The lost strangers soon will find rest.

The soldier no longer shall roam,
But soon shall land safely ashore,
Each soon will arrive at his own native home,
And struggle in warfare no more.

The union of brothers is sweet,
Whose wives and children do come,
Their sons and fair daughters with pleasure they greet,
When long absent fathers come home.

They never shall languish again,
Nor discord their union shall break,
When brothers no longer lament and complain,
Hence never each other forsake.

Hang closely together like friends,
By peace killing foes never driven,
The storm of commotion eternally ends,
And earth will soon turn into Heaven.

Notes:

The epigraph of this poem was originally omitted in the changeover to the new website. Because of this, reciting the epigraph is optional for the 2019-2020 Poetry Out Loud season.

Source: *"Words for the Hour": A New Anthology of American Civil War Poetry*, edited by Faith Barrett and Cristanne Miller (University of Massachusetts Press, 2005)



Born a slave on William Horton's tobacco plantation, George Moses Horton taught himself to read. Around 1815 he began composing poems in his head, saying them aloud and "selling" them to buyers at the weekly Chapel Hill farmers market. As his fame spread, he gained the attention of Caroline Lee Whiting Hentz, a novelist and professor's wife who transcribed his poetry and helped publish it in the newspaper. With her assistance, Horton published his first collection of poetry, *The Hope of Liberty* (1829), becoming the first African American to publish a book in the South—and the only one to publish it while still in slavery. After 68 years as a slave, he settled in Philadelphia for 17 years of freedom before his death. His poetry explores faith, love, and slavery while celebrating the rural beauty of Chatham County, home of the plantation on which Horton spent much of his life.

[See More By This Poet](#)