

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Casabianca

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(Felicia Hemans (1793 - 1835))

The boy stood on the burning deck
Whence all but he had fled;
The flame that lit the battle's wreck
Shone round him o'er the dead.

Yet beautiful and bright he stood,
As born to rule the storm;
A creature of heroic blood,
A proud, though child-like form.

The flames rolled on; he would not go
Without his Father's word;
That father, faint in death below,
His voice no longer heard.

He called aloud 'say, Father, say
If yet my task is done?'
He knew not that the chieftain lay
Unconscious of his son.

'Speak, father!' once again he cried,
'If I may yet be gone!'
And but the booming shots replied,
And fast the flames rolled on.

Upon his brow he felt their breath,
And in his waving hair,
And looked from that lone post of death
In still yet brave despair.

And shouted but once more aloud,
'My father! must I stay?'
While o'er him fast, through sail and shroud,
The wreathing fires made way.

They wrapt the ship in splendour wild,
They caught the flag on high,
And streamed above the gallant child,
Like banners in the sky.

There came a burst of thunder sound

The boy - oh! where was he?
Ask of the winds that far around
With fragments strewed the sea!
With mast, and helm, and pennon fair,
That well had borne their part
But the noblest thing which perished there
Was that young faithful heart.

Notes:

Young Casabianca, a boy about thirteen years old, son of the admiral of the Orient, remained at his post (in the Battle of the Nile), after the ship had taken fire, and all the guns had been abandoned; and perished in the explosion of the vessel, when the flames had reached the powder.

DC

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