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A British Lieutenant Writes Home (November 25, 1779)

Robert Lundin

'Tis the year of our Lord, Seventeen Hundred Seventy-Nine,
N'er a one of us, my Love, had conceived these cold times,
A Connecticut wind off the gray Atlantic, woefully howls,
Yet 'tis nothing to the fear
Of hot lead shot through the bowels.

These rebel soldiers, maltrained, scarcely know a formation,
They're farmers, homesteaders, the devil's damnation;
For by the sight of his musket, crude weapons by our craft,
He murdered my dear Sergeant,
With a squirrel gun's naked wrath.

I've heard shrieks of my men, shot straight to the eye,
By rag-tag soldiers, malcontents. Save to you I shant lie,
That Americans, as they'd say it, are a brave breed we've bred,
And among my King's ranks,
To off' seen I two shades of red.

'Tis three years in conflict, 'twill be thirty I've aged,
'Twill be lines crossed my face for the killing I've waged.
Now Louis brings his fleet, this treason grows to war,
Damn those opportunist bastards!
Blast the French whore!

Forgive me, my Love, for the stench in my speech,
I've grown too accustomed to men blown off their feet.
How I long, more than life, for the Lincolnshire dales,
And to be in thy arms,
First in ship's hold, set sail.

'Morrow is called a truce, in this ungentlemanly war.
I shall live another day, with God's grace a few more.
They spite we British soldiers, serving King as our living,
The colonists have proclaimed,
'Morrow as Thanksgiving.