

AFTER ALL
by William Winter

October 18, 1862

The apples are ripe in the orchard,
The work of the reaper is done,
And the golden woodlands redden
In the blood of the dying sun.

At the cottage-door the grandsire
Sits, pale in his easy-chair,
While the gentle wind of twilight
Plays with his silver hair.

A woman is kneeling beside him;
A fair young head is prest,
In the first wild passion of sorrow,
Against his aged breast.

And far from over the distance
The faltering echoes come
Of the flying blast of trumpet
And the rattling roll of drum.

And the grandsire speaks in a whisper—
“The end no [text is unclear];
But we give him to [text is unclear] country,
And we give our prayers to Thee?”

The violets star the meadows,
The rosebuds [text is unclear] the door,
And over the [text is unclear] orchard
The pink-white blossoms pour.

But the grandsire's chair is empty,
The cottage is dark and still;
There's a nameless grave in the battlefield,
And a new one under the hill.

And a pallid, tearless woman
By the cold hearth sits alone,
And the old clock in the corner
Ticks on with a steady drone.