

WILLIAM BEAU DARE

J. Patrick Lewis

*Civil War Confederate Deserter
2nd Tennessee Mounted Infantry
1863*

What will it be tonight, William Beau Dare?
You say, C'est la vie , and they say, C'est la guerre.

I'll fluff me a pillow here under the stars
And capture the glitter in vinegar jars.

What are you looking for, William Beau Dare?
They'll hunt you from misery back to despair.

There's only one mystery that matters to me:
Why life is the torment it turned out to be.

What are you fearful of, William Beau Dare,
The bullet, the rope, or the winds of warfare?

Taking my orders from bungling Bragg,
A General whose honor dishonors the flag.

Where are you going to, William Beau Dare?
You'll find little comfort. There's little to spare.

Existence is nothing inside this cage.
How much have we missed of our easy age?

Who will you take along, William Beau Dare,
Strangers, your neighbors or nearest of kin?

I'll take for companion a tippie of tea,
Two dollars, an onion, a book on the sea.

When will we hear from you, William Beau Dare,
The first of Begone or the last of Beware?

I'll write you a letter in blood and ink
Of journeys to nowhere, then see what you think.

What if it's nevermore, William Beau Dare?

What if you're living another nightmare?

Remember a boy to his dear old mum
I'll be waitin' for her in kingdom come.

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Contemporary Rhyme Vol. 4 No. 4 2007