**“Paul Reveres Ride” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **LISTEN, my children, and you shall hear**  **Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,**  **On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-Five;**  **Hardly a man is now alive**  **Who remembers that famous day and year.**  **He said to his friend, "If the British march**  **By land or sea from the town to-night,**  **Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch**  **Of the North Church tower, as a signal light, --**  **One, if by land, and two, if by sea;**  **And I on the opposite shore will be,**  **Ready to ride and spread the alarm**  **Through every Middlesex village and farm,**  **For the country-folk to be up and to arm."**  **Then he said "Good-night!" and with muffled oar**  **Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,**  **Just as the moon rose over the bay,**  **Where swinging wide at her moorings lay**  **The Somerset, British man-of-war;**  **A phantom ship, with each mast and spar**  **Across the moon like a prison-bar,**  **And a huge black hulk, that was magnified**  **By its own reflection in the tide.**  **Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street**  **Wanders and watches with eager ears,**  **Till in the silence around him he hears**  **The muster of men at the barrack door,**  **The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,**  **And the measured tread of the grenadiers,**  **Marching down to their boats on the shore.** | **Then he climbed the tower of the Old North Church,**  **By the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,**  **To the belfry-chamber overhead,**  **And startled the pigeons from their perch**  **On the somber rafters, that round him made**  **Masses and moving shapes of shade, --**  **By the trembling ladder, steep and tall,**  **To the highest window in the wall,**  **Where he paused to listen and look down**  **A moment on the roofs of the town,**  **And the moonlight flowing over all.**  **Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,**  **In their night-encampment on the hill,**  **Wrapped in silence so deep and still**  **That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,**  **The watchful night-wind, as it went**  **Creeping along from tent to tent,**  **And seeming to whisper, "All is well!"**  **A moment only he feels the spell**  **Of the place and the hour, the secret dread**  **Of the lonely belfry and the dead;**  **For suddenly all his thoughts are bent**  **On a shadowy something far away,**  **Where the river widens to meet the bay, --**  **A line of black, that bends and floats**  **On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.** |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,**  **Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride**  **On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.**  **Now he patted his horse's side,**  **Now gazed on the landscape far and near,**  **Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,**  **And turned and tightened his saddle-girth;**  **But mostly he watched with eager search**  **The belfry-tower of the Old North Church,**  **As it rose above the graves on the hill,**  **Lonely and spectral and somber and still.**  **And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height**  **A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!**  **He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,**  **But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight**  **A second lamp in the belfry burns!**  **A hurry of hoofs in a village street,**  **A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,**  **And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark**  **Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet:**  **That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,**  **The fate of a nation was riding that night;**  **And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,**  **Kindled the land into flame with its heat.**  **He has left the village and mounted the steep,**  **And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,**  **Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;**  **And under the alders that skirt its edge,**  **Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,**  **Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.**  **It was twelve by the village clock,**  **When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.**  **He heard the crowing of the cock,**  **And the barking of the farmer's dog,**  **And felt the damp of the river fog,**  **That rises after the sun goes down.** | **It was one by the village clock,**  **When he galloped into Lexington.**  **He saw the gilded weathercock**  **Swim in the moonlight as he passed,**  **And the meeting-house windows, blank and bare,**  **Gaze at him with a spectral glare,**  **As if they already stood aghast**  **At the bloody work they would look upon.**  **It was two by the village clock,**  **When be came to the bridge in Concord town.**  **He heard the bleating of the flock,**  **And the twitter of birds among the trees,**  **And felt the breath of the morning breeze**  **Blowing over the meadows brown.**  **And one was safe and asleep in his bed**  **Who at the bridge would be first to fall,**  **Who that day would be lying dead,**  **Pierced by a British musket-ball.**  **You know the rest. In the books you have read,**  **How the British regulars fired and fled, --**  **How the farmers gave them ball for ball,**  **From behind each fence and farm-yard wall,**  **Chasing the red-coats down the lane,**  **Then crossing the fields to emerge again**  **Under the trees at the turn of the road,**  **And only pausing to fire and load.**  **So through the night rode Paul Revere;**  **And so through the night went his cry of alarm**  **To every Middlesex village and farm, --**  **A cry of defiance and not of fear,**  **A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,**  **And a word that shall echo forevermore!**  **For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,**  **Through all our history, to the last,**  **In the hour of darkness and peril and need,**  **The people will waken and listen to hear**  **The hurrying hoof-beat of that steed,**  **And the midnight-message of Paul Revere.**  **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1860.** |