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

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| **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.** |

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| **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.** |