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An Elegy by Andrew Dunphy Our readers already know of Andrew Dunphy as the maker of "Johnny Nicholson" and "The Fate of Daniel Gwinn" (see "Searching for Cape Breton Folk Songs" in Issue 41 of Cape Breton's Magazine). We collected those as songs but, like the following, we suspect they were first made as poems, and at the specific request of the family of those who died. The following elegy was made in memory of three MacPherson children who died of diphtheria the winter of 1900-1901. A wanderer within the communities down north, Andrew Dunphy knew and loved these children, helped, nurse them till they died, then wrote this poetry. Oh friends draw near and listen To this mournful tale I tell, It's of two little children dear And them I loved full well. It was Annie dear and Flora May Scarce nine and seven years And while I write with trembling hand I can't restrain my tears. The first took sick was Flora May My darling and my pride We watched her through long hours of pain Scarce ever left her side. From day to day she weaker grew Until that final hour We saw her slowly pine away Then wither like a flower. The long and weary night wore on Her hour had come to die All nature seemed in slumber bound The moon shown bright on high. A vision to this child appeared Sent by the Father's hand The misty veil was cleared away She saw the Promised Land. The Gates of Heaven were opened wide Forth came the angel band For to take that darling child away To that bright happy land. Her arms were around her papa's neck With him she feign would stay, Bright angels hovered overhead And she saw them where she lay. "The stars in Heaven shine bright," she "And angels there above. /says Oh I shall soon go home with them For Jesus do me love." More restless she at length became Moving from place to place And dimmer grew her once bright eyes And paler was her face. We mournfully stood by her side We knew the end was near In silence we gazed on her face And in silence fell each tear. The look she gave right through me went From that face so fair and young Her dying eyes they pierced my heart My nerves were all unstrung. Our hopes were gone, our cares in vain Full well we knew 'twas death And slowly that weary night wore on And fainter grew her breath. Grim death he came and a cruel hand On her tender form did lay Now she is dead and the coffin's lid Conceals my Flora May. In death her sufferings were relieved By His all powerful will But scarcely had she passed away When Annie became ill. Much the same as Flora May She too lay sick in bed We nursed her there mostly tenderly And eased her aching head. My heart was filled with sorrow too But I could stand somehow To rest her head upon my hand And fan her fevered brow. And to her papa she did say, "Oh all on earth I'd give With you and Mama for to stay As long as you would live." Her parents near distracted were Overcome with toil and grief Their children dying in their arms And could give no relief. Few friends there were around her bed Their sorrow for to share For blessings on that dying child We asked the Lord in prayer. What feelings crowd that mother's breast For the children dear she bore That they from her were forced to part On earth to meet no more. Clapsed in her mother's loving arms She quietly passed away. "To Heaven I'm going Mama," she said "With God and Flora May."



Now to the cold damp earth they are borne  
There to sleep side by side  
A solemn gloom o'erspreads this home  
Since those dear children died.  
No more will Annie tend those flocks  
As she had done before  
No more we'll hear her merry voice  
Or footsteps at the door.  
I'll never forget them while I live  
Though the tomb do intervene  
The loving smile and merry words  
And places we have been.  
Their hand in mine we have roamed the  
Close by the rippling sea /shore  
Or rambled o'er those flowery fields  
Among the busy bees.  
The songsters too in yonder grove  
Full well they do their part  
Sweet nature dressed in beauty's robes  
Did cheer my lonely heart.  
But oh those girls were crown on all  
When them I would behold  
Their forms appeared more bright to me'  
Than all earth's glittering gold. (77)