

The Most Difficult Duty

By Ernst Pacully
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I think of you, whom I once left,
With my head in my hands, I cannot – do not want to – grasp it:
Duty has now pitted me against you,
I am now to hate the land of my Fathers!
That which none thought possible has occurred:
Columbia is at war with Germania.

The heart beats heavily, I am robbed of my spirit,
In my thoughts I see the droves of Europe
Slaughtering themselves in a sea of blood,
Where once there were peaceful villages and fields;
And now, as Germany's newest enemy,
America has joined the others.

But it must be – We do not falter.
Columbia, we remain loyal to You:
A German man has always done his duty.
Our hearts may break – And yet, we will show You once more.
But no one here may deny us the right
To cry for those whom we so love.

The conflict between the heart and a sense of duty
Is the most difficult struggle – but duty must prevail,
As often in the bloody thick of battle,
Injustice must succumb to justice.
But were I not to grieve for you back home,
I would be ashamed of myself for the rest of my life!

We German Americans are in a difficult spot,
Unspeakably difficult; it is enough to despair,
Were it not for the hope that shines before us
That God's hour of peace will strike soon.
And so, at every hour,
We will help to mend the wounds of this war!