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Suggested Citation:

“ ‘Ballet for Sam Marshall,’ 26 May 1799.” *Tennessee Ancestors* 16, no. 3 (December 2000): 224-227.

"BALLET FOR SAM MARSHALL, 26 MAY 1799"

*Donated by
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Editor's Note: The author of the anti-slavery poem below is unknown, though it is likely a white acquaintance of Samuel Marshall. Marshall, ancestor of the donors, was born ca. 1750 in North Carolina. He moved from Warren County ca. 1806 to Anderson County, Tennessee, where he died in 1832.

The Genius of Universal Emancipation, the first abolitionist newspaper in the United States, was first published in Tennessee in 1822. It published a number of poems like this "ballet" (ballad), though not this one. The first upsurge of interest in abolitionism came around the 1790s from Quakers, Methodists, and Baptists. Warren County, North Carolina, had the largest slave to free person ratio of any county in North Carolina in the 1790s.

--Steve Cotham

*Lord if thou dost with Equil Eyes
See all the sons of adam Rise
Why dost thou hide thy face from Slaves
Confined by fate to serve such Naves*

*Stolen and sold in africa
Transported to America
Like hogs and sheep in market sold
To stand the heat and bear the Cold*

*To work all day and half the night
And rise before the morning Light
Sustain the Lash and Bear the pain
Exposd to storms of Snow and Rain*

*Pinchd both with honger and with Cold
If we Complain we meet a Scold
And after all the tedious roud
At night like Beasts lie on the Ground*

Hath heaven decreed that Negroes Must

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*By cruel men be ever Oprist
Forever drag the Galling Chain
And near enjoy themselves again*

*When will Jehovah hear Our cries
When will the sons of freedom rise
When will a Moses for us stand
Afree us all from pharaohs hand*

*What tho our skin be Black as jet
Our hair be curld Our noses be flat
Must we for this no freedom have
Untill we find it in the grave*

*Yet while I thus my fate Condole
Jesus my Lord proses my soul
That when my Slavery here shall End
I may ascend to the my my friend*

*Tho here is none to Plead my Cause
My Soul apeal to thy just Laws
Who will bring all things to the Light
I know thy judgments Lord air right*

*Tis all the Comfort that I have
While I am here Confind a slave
Is that strong hope that Im made free
By thy Rich Blood once shed for me*

*My soul is free it Cant be sold
For all the Gold that Can be told
And when my body drops in dust
My spirit in thy hand I trust*

*And tho no Coffin I shall have
Nor yet be laid into a grave
The Lord shall watch it from the skies
Till the great trumpet bids it rise*

*Contentment Lord on me bestow
While I remain a slave below
And while I suffer Grief and wrong
May thy Salvation be my Song*

*Finis
Ballet for Sam Marshall 26 May 1799*

Lord if thou dost with Envy's Eyes
See all the sons of Adam's Race
Why dost thou hide thy face from Slaves
Confin'd by fate to serve such Slaves
2 Stolen and sold in Africa
transported to America
Like hogs and sheep in market sold
to stand the heat and bear the cold
3 To work all day and half the night
and rise before the morning Light
Sustain the lash and bear the pain
Exposed to storms of snow and rain
4 Pinch'd both with hunger and with cold
If we complain we meet a scold
And after all the tedious road
At night like beasts lie on the ground
5 Hath heaven decreed that Negroes must
by cruel men be ever Opprest
forever drag the Gallig Chain
And never enjoy themselves again
6 When will Jehovah hear our cries
When will the ^{sons} of freedom rise
When will a Moses for us stand
Afree us all from Pharaoh's hand
7 What tho' our skin be black as jet
Our hair be curl'd our noses be flat
must we for this no freedom have
Untill we find it in the grave

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Yet while I thus my fate condole
Jesus my Lord press my soul
That when my Slavery here shall end
I may ascend to thee my friend

9 Tho here is none to plead my Cause
My soul appeal to thy just Laws
Who will bring all things to the Light
I know thy Judgments Lord are right

10 'Tis all the Comfort that I have
While I am here confin'd a slave
Is that strong hope that I am made free
By thy Rich Blood once shed for me

11 My soul is free it can't be sold
For all the Gold that can be told
and when my body drops in dust
my spirit in thy hand I trust

12 And tho no Coffin I shall have
Nor yet be laid into a grave
The Lord shall watch it from the Skies
Till the great trumpet bids it rise

13 Contentment Lord on me bestow
While I remain a slave below
And while I suffer grief and wrong
May thy Salvation be my song

Finis

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