

## POEMS

# *An Anthem to Mary Seacole*

*Mary Seacole, Mary Seacole,  
Mary Seacole, we'll sing your history.*

*Mary came up from Jamaica's fair land  
To give the mother country a hand.  
Serve the sick in the battlefield  
With loving care until their wounds were healed.  
But she met a woman with a light  
Who walked with it throughout the night,  
Who said that she did not have the right  
Because her hands didn't wash off white.*

*Mary Seacole, Mary Seacole,  
Mary Seacole, we'll sing your history.*

*But our Mary did but persevere  
Because as we know she had no fear.  
She nursed the sick and made them well  
When on the battlefield they daily fell.  
She fought with the woman with the light  
She fought with her to prove her right  
So she helped the wounded in their fight  
E'en though her hands didn't wash off white.*

*Mary Seacole, Mary Seacole,  
Mary Seacole, we'll sing your history.*

*Crimea's come and Crimea's long gone  
And the history's writ but there is no song.  
Mary's not given any space  
On any of the pages we could trace;  
But you know that woman with the light  
Was showered with praise and treated right  
While Mary's work was brushed out of sight  
Because her hands didn't wash off white.*

*Mary Seacole, Mary Seacole,  
Mary Seacole, we'll sing your history.*

*War at an end to poverty she went*

*Her duty done and her money spent.  
Though abandoned by the nation she served  
On the role of honour, no place reserved.  
But her acts of love; omnipotence  
Stung the ordinary conscience.  
So private people did what was right  
E'en though her hands didn't wash off white.*

*Mary Seacole, Mary Seacole,  
Mary Seacole, we'll sing your history.*

*As history is only what you're allow'd to see  
Great truths're hidden about this country.  
The moral of the story then friends  
Is History must begin to make amends  
For neglect has fixed our attitudes,  
Coloured our thoughts; soured our moods.  
Use Mary's symbol to put things right  
Because her hands didn't wash off white.*

*Mary Seacole, Mary Seacole.  
Mary Seacole, we'll sing your history.*

*By John Rafferty*