

Origins of this song:

When the Rebellion of 1837 failed, many young French-Canadian supporters of Louis-Joseph Papineau had to flee their country to escape punishment. Some took refuge in the United States, and a student named M.A. Gérin-Lajoie wrote a song about one of these young exiles. In it, he pictures the young man walking by the banks of a river that flows toward his homeland and asking the river to carry his greetings to his loved ones.

UN CANADIEN ERRANT

French words by: Antoine Gérin-Lajoie (1839)

Un Canadien errant
Banni de ses foyers
Parcourait en pleurant
Des pays étrangers.

Once a Canadian lad,
Exiled from hearth and home,
Wandered, alone and sad,
Through alien lands unknown.

Un jour, triste et pensif,
Assis au bord des flots,
Au courant fugitif
Il adressa ces mots:

Down by a rushing stream,
Thoughtful and sad one day,
He watched the water pass,
And to it he did say:

« Si tu vois mon pays,
Mon pays malheureux,
Va, dis à mes amis
Que je me souviens d'eux.

"If you should reach my land,
My most unhappy land,
Please speak to all my friends,
So they will understand.

Ô jours si pleins d'appas
Vous êtes disparus,
Et ma patrie, hélas!
Je ne la verrai plus!

Tell them how much I wish
That I could be once more
In my beloved land,
That I will see no more.

Non, mais en expirant,
Ô mon cher Canada,
Mon regard languissant
Vers toi se portera.»

My own beloved land
I'll not forget till death,
And I will speak of her
With my last dying breath.



Source of English version: Reproduced from <<http://ingeb.org/songs/uncanadi.html>>
Un Canadien Errant, french words by Antoine Gérin-Lajoie (1839). Public domain.