THE MISSING AIRMAN

O, sometimes yet I feel lonely,
For him who went away overseas;
Times healing wing, and time only,
Can soothe the empty heart with ease.

That parting hour was hard to bear,
When we shook hands and said good-bye.
Hope alone breathed over our prayer,
While tears rose up and dimmed each eye.

But our Mother, in sore distress,
Was heard from o'er the restless wave.
Her sons falter'd not in her stress,
It was victory, or the grave.

Jim sleeps, with many comrades brave,
Sleep on; your battle is done.
No lonely cross will mark the grave,
Where rests the Empire's warrior son.

Wchihi lunuween
pumihleeshiiwii ahkumahkwat

Thumew iyoonek naa manmumaynwaa
Wchihi lunuweepiin naa manmumaynwaa (be far away)
Sahku kikexhewi chashkuyeew waak sahku shukw
Wchihi lunuween Alaaan winch naapii akooniitaa

Loosoomayn naa manmumaynwaa
Eendii lunoomeek kahkowkiiwiiweena' naa kooniitaa'nii manumayn
Kuwenkexhewiwin kahkowkiiwiiweena' kikexhewiwin naa manumayn
Naakexhewiwin kahkowkiiwiiweena' naa kooniitaa'nii manumayn
Wuchukulun kahkowkiiwiiweena' naa kooniitaa'nii manumayn

Shukw kukuna
Loosoomayn kahkowkiiwiiweena' (feel-grief)
Lusunaweew niyellii kahkowkiiwiiweena' (go-across the water)
Niwa kiskuyeew mutaapii kook iypaapii kahkowkiiwiiweena' (feel-grief)
Niwa kuskayk aweewi mawihniwewi (hard time seeing)
Mawihniwewi kuskayk aweewi mawihniwewi (hard time seeing)

Nelson Moses

This poem was written in 1917 by Nelson Moses of the Delaware Band on the Six Nations of the Grand River Reserve, near Brantford, Ontario. During the First World War, his son Lieutenant James David Moses was an air gunner and observer in a DH-4 aircraft in No. 57 Squadron of the RAF. Nelson wrote this poem shortly after his beloved son was declared missing in action.

Originally written in English, "The Missing Airman" was translated into Lennape by Ian McCullum and Elders from the Munsie Delaware nation near London, Ontario.

James D. Moses with other officers of the 117th Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force, ca. 1916.

James D. Moses served aboard a de Havilland DH-4. C. 1918.