

Where I Can See the Stars

Chorus:

Lay me down where I can see the stars - the light that leads me home
Lay me down where I can see the stars - between them I will roam

Verses:

Deep in the mountains Vetter made his home
He lived his life alone
Nature was both friend and foe from his cabin he would go
The wilderness his home

A grizzly had been troublin' him, to the river he'd do him in
He had himself a plan
A moment he'd forever dread, the fight had not gone well he said
His rifle chamber jammed.

John Corbett barely knew his name, to Vetter's door for shelter came
Hi door was open wide.
And there beside poor Vetter lay a note upon which Vetter'd prayed
He'd written his last lines

Left for dead he crawled away to his cabin he ebbed away
Ableedin' on the ground.
"I'm weak, I'm dying" was all he wrote, no-one to hear a word he spoke
John Corbett laid him down

Notes:

Phillip Henry Vetter left a life in the Shenandoah Valley to go west with his family and settled in Lander, Wyoming. He took off for the mountains and the life of a Mountain Man.

Such a life was extremely remote and whilst you might know of other people you'd rarely see anyone from one year to the next. One of these rare visits he anticipated caused him to leave a note which mentioned that he was going down to the river 'after some bear'.

A buffalo hunter, John Corbett knew of Vetter's cabin and headed for it as a bad weather threatened. He found the cabin door open and Vetter's corpse lying on the floor. Corbett got help from the Gleaver Ranch and finding an additional note near the corpse, scrawled in Vetter's own blood on newspaper, pieced together the last moments of Vetter's life.

Vetter had gone to kill the bear, but his rifle chamber jammed. Badly mawled, the bear had left him for dead, and Vetter dragged himself back to his cabin to die. Corbett and Gleaver laid him to rest September 1892. He was 37.