

The Minstrel's Story

Lyrics © 2005 Laura Berlage

Air from "The Knight and the Shepherd's Daughter" Child #110

When I was six and ten years old
My father said to me,
"Son it's time for to advance yourself
And learn to be scholarly."
With a roo-rum-roradee
Ri-rum-roradee
Right-me-worradee-ann.

"They say that down in London town
There's a university,
And if you love your family's name
Then that's where you should be."
With a roo-rum-roradee
Ri-rum-roradee
Right-me-worradee-ann.

Well there was nothing in this world
Could sway him from his course,
So I swallowed all my protests then
And mounted my gray horse.
With a roo-rum-roradee
Ri-rum-roradee
Right-me-worradee-ann.

I rode and rode for many a day
'Til I came to London town,
My heart it beat so very fast
I barely touched the ground.
With a roo-rum-roradee
Ri-rum-roradee
Right-me-worradee-ann.

Well I had been there only for
Twelve months and maybe three,
When my father sent a letter
Addressed right straight to me.
With a roo-rum-roradee
Ri-rum-roradee
Right-me-worradee-ann.

I broke the seal that was so red
And there to my surprise,
It was what he had writ therein

That opened wide my eyes.
With a roo-rum-roradee
Ri-rum-roradee
Right-me-worradee-ann.

At first I thought that he'd be pleased
I'd upheld the family's name,
But it seems that other news than good
Had reached him of my fame.
With a roo-rum-roradee
Ri-rum-roradee
Right-me-worradee-ann.

He said he'd hear I played my lute
At the fountain all the day,
That instead of at good study
I spent his money at play.
With a roo-rum-roradee
Ri-rum-roradee
Right-me-worradee-ann.

He warned that if I did not clean
My act full soon anon,
All his financial help and good advice
It would be gone.
With a roo-rum-roradee
Ri-rum-roradee
Right-me-worradee-ann.

Well I tell you straight I did not like
How he did chide me so,
So I took my father for his word
And as a minstrel I now go.
With a roo-rum-roradee
Ri-rum-roradee
Right-me-worradee-ann.

So if you write a letter
For to rant and rave and vent,
Be sure to pay attention as to
What you do intent.
With a roo-rum-roradee
Ri-rum-roradee
Right-me-worradee-ann.

With a roo-rum-roradee
Ri-rum-roradee
Right-me-worradee-ann.

Sweet William

Child # 106

Arrangement © 2004 Laura Berlage

Come all ye ladies great and small
Give ear unto me one and all,
And I will let you understand
What I have suffered in this land.

My father was as brave a lord
As ever Europe did afford,
My mother was a lady gay
Dressed in glories of rich array.

And I myself a lady fair
My father's chief and only heir,
And when my dear old father died
Then I was made a nice young bride.

My love he built for me a bower
Bedecked with many a fragrant flower,
A brighter bower was never seen
Than the one my true love built for me.

But there came thieves late in the night
They broke my bower, they slew my knight,
And after that since my knight was slain
I could no longer there remain.

My servants all from me did fly
In the midst of my extremity,
And left me by myself alone
With a heart as cold as lead or stone.

But though my heart was full of care
Heaven would not suffer me despair,
And so in haste I changed my name
From Fair Ellen to Sweet William.

Then on one day it happened so
That I to the King's court did go,
All that I of his grace did crave
Was that a serving place I might have.

"Keep up young man," the King replied
"Your suit it shall not be denied,

But first tell me what you can do
You will be suited there unto.”

“Will you be taster of my wine
To wait upon me when I dine,
Or will you be my chamberlain
To make my bed both soft and fine?”

Sweet William with a smiling face
Said to the King, “If it please your grace,
To show such favor unto me
Your chamberlain I fain would be.”

And the King did all his nobles call
And asked council of them all,
To which they did all agree
Sweet William the King’s chamberlain should be.

Then on one day it chanced so
That the King he did a-hunting go,
He took along with him all his train
Sweet William did at home remain.

And when he saw that the house was clear
He took a flute that he had there,
And on it he played melodious
Which made an old man’s heart rejoice.

“I had my company fair and free
Continually to visit me,
But now alas, I have not one
Since I’ve become a serving man.”

And when the King from hunting came
He called upon this good old man
“What news, what news,” the King did say
“What news have you for me today?”

“Brave news!” the old man he did say
“Sweet William is a lady gay,
And when the King the truth had found
His joy did more and more abound.

And then for fear of any strife
He took Sweet William for his wife,
The like before was never seen
A serving man to become a queen.

Legend of the Irish Harp

Traditional Story / Tune: The Butterfly
Retold and Arranged by Laura Berlage © 2005

Once upon a time, a long time ago, there lived a young wife in a quaint little cottage along the Irish sea-coast. Every morning after finishing the chores about the house, she would take long walks on the beach, watching the gulls circle overhead and the sunlight dance upon the water.

Then one day, something special happened. While on one of her walks, the young wife heard a strange sound drifting on the coastal breeze, a haunting strain of music. Curious, she followed the sound that seemed to ebb and swell with the wind until she came upon the cause of such a melody.

There, washed up upon the shore were the skeletal remains of a great whale, bleached white from the sun, its arched rib cage curving high above the sand. As the wind whistled through the bones, they hummed and sang in echoing harmony. The young wife was enchanted by the music and decided to rest a while to listen, but soon she fell fast asleep, lulled by the wind in the whale and the warm sunshine.

It was noontime when her husband returned to their cottage from his shop. He entered happily, expecting his noonday meal, only to find the house unexpectedly empty. Thinking his beloved was perhaps away fetching water from the well, he decided to wait, but his worry grew ever stronger when at length she did not return. Afraid that something might have happened, he decided to set out in search of his missing wife.

Following the path he knew she usually took on her morning walks, the young man soon heard the wonderful music and quickened his pace to find its source. Soon he came upon the whale and his peacefully sleeping wife and thankfully realized what had happened. He too found the music hauntingly delightful, and after gently waking his wife, they relaxed together a great while upon the shore, listening in rapture to tunes no one else had ever heard before. But the day soon passed until it was growing dark and time for them to return home before nightfall.

But the memory of the music made by the whale's many ribs and the wind stayed with them. How could they capture that music and make it their own? Working with his tools of trade, the young man fashioned a frame of wood, wider at the top and narrower at the base, while his wife spun a set of strings, one for each rib. Once strung, their fingers became the wind that gave breath to this new instrument which they soon shared with all their friends and family, and that is how the Irish harp came to the people of Erin.

Garsenda

Trobairitz / Troubadour Poetry circa 1200
by Garsenda de Forcalquier and Sir Guy de Cavaillon
Music and arrangement © 2004 Laura Berlage

Vos que.m semblatz dels corals amadors,
ja non volgra que fossetz tan doptanz,
e platz me molt quar bos destreing m'amors,
qu'asterssi sui eu per vos malananz.

ez avetz dan en bostre vulpillatge,
quar no.us ausatz de preiar enardir,
e faitz a vos ez a mi gar dampnatge
que ges dompna non ausa descobrir
tot so q'il bol per paor de faillir.

Bona dompna, vostr' onrada valors
mi fai temeros estar, tan es granz,
e no.m , tol negun' altra paors
q'eu non vos prec, que.us volria enanz
tan gen server que non fezes oltratge,
qu'aissi.m sai eu de preiar edardir,
e volria q'il faich fosson messatge,
e presessetz en loc de prec server
q'us honratz faitz deu be valer un dir.

You who seem a true-hearted lover
I wish you wouldn't be so hesitant
I'm pleased you're beset by your love for me
Since my heart is forlorn by my love for you
My love for you.
You thwart your intent by your own restraint
For the risk of courting you've dared not take
You do us both a great disservice
For a lady simply dares not her wishes reveal
For fear of disgrace.

Good Lady, your honorable rank and virtue
Leaves me in awe of your eminence
My fear of pretension impedes my affections
My greatest desire it so serve you most nobly
And cause no offence.
Indeed, I can take the risk of courting
But would ask that actions be messages
I hope you will deem them of equal worth
For noble deeds as much as words deserve
Deserve your grace.

My Lord Willoughby's Welcome Home

Traditional / John Dowland
Arrangement © 2006 Laura Berlage

The fifteenth day of July
With glistening spear and shield,
The famous fight in Flanders
Was foughten in the field.
The most courageous officers

Were English captains three,
But the greatest in the battle
Was brave Lord Willoughby.

“Stand to it noble pikesmen
And look you round about,
And shoot your right ye bowmen
And we will keep them out.
You musket and cavalrymen
Do you prove true to me,
I’ll be the foremost man in the fight”
Said brave Lord Willoughby.

Then quoth the Spanish general
“Come let us march away,
For I fear we shall be spoiled all
If we here longer stay.
For yonder comes Lord Willoughby
With courage fierce and fell,
He will not give one inch of way
For all the devils in hell.”

And then the fearful enemy
Was quickly put to flight,
Our men pursued courageously
And caught their forces quite.
But at the last they gave a shout
Which echoed through the sky,
“God and Saint George for England”
The conquerors did cry.

To the soldiers that were maimed
Or wounded in the fray,
The Queen allowed a pension
Of eighteen pence a day.
And from all costs and charges
She quit and set them free,
And this she did all for the sake
Of brave Lord Willoughby.

So courage noble Englishmen
And never be afraid,
For if we be but one to ten
We will not be afraid.
To fight the foreign enemy
And set our country free,
And thus I end my bloody bout
Of brave Lord Willoughby.

Sandwood Down to Kyle

By Dave Goulder

© 1970 Robbins Music

Arranged by Laura Berlage and Tom Draughon

One Monday morn as I walked out
The wild birds for to see,
I met a man upon the road
Who asked for charity,
I met a man upon the road
Who asked for charity.

Come home with me and drink your fill
And comforts you shall find,
And tell me why you walk the road
That leaves the hills behind,
And tell me why you walk the road
That leaves the hills behind.

Well time has spent the summer, sir
And soon the leaves will fall,
I hear the sound within the wind
That plays around your hall,
I hear the sound within the wind
That plays around your hall.

The bird must flee the winter, sir
She cannot stay behind,
To build her nest upon the snow
Nor can I look for mine,
To build her nest upon the snow
Nor can I look for mine.

But if I had a hundred homes
To live in each a while,
I'd build them all along the coast
From Sandwood down to Kyle,
I'd build them all along the coast
From Sandwood down to Kyle.

Robin Hood and the Golden Arrow

Child # 152

Arrangement © 2004 Laura Berlage

Lithe and listen gentlemen
That be of freeborn blood,
And I shall tell you of a brave yeoman
His name was Robin Hood.

Once when the proud sheriff of Nottingham
Was plague'd sore with grief,
He spoke no good of Robin Hood
That strong and sturdy thief.

So to the London road he passed
His losses to unfold,
Unto the King who listened to
The story the sheriff told.

“Why,” quoth the King, “What shall I do
Art thou not sheriff for me?
Go take thy course, the law enforce
On them that injure thee.”

“Go get thee gone and by thyself
Make up some tricking game,
For to enthrall the rebels all
Go take thy course with them.”

Derry down, derry dee, derry nye dee dyedle doo
Down derry nye dee dyedle a day,
Derry down, derry dee, derry nye dee dyedle doo
Down derry nye, dyedle day.

Not long and the sheriff he had a plan
A shooting match to hold,
And he that shot the best of all
Should win a prized arrow of gold.

For in his mind the sheriff thought
That when such matches were,
Those outlaws stout, beyond all doubt
Would be the bowmen there.

Then tidings came to Robin Hood
Under the greenwood tree,
“Prepare ye then my merry men

We'll go yon sport to see."

Oh then bespoke brave Little John
"Come let us thither go,
Yet listen to me how it shall be
That the sheriff needs not know."

"Our mantles all of the Lincoln green
Behind us we shall leave,
We'll dress us all so differently
That they shall not us perceive."

*Derry down, derry dee, derry nye dee dyedle doo
Down derry nye dee dyedle a day,
Derry down, derry dee, derry nye dee dyedle doo
Down derry nye, dyedle day.*

Forth from the greenwood they are gone
With hearts both brave and stout,
And mixed them with the sheriff's men
To have a hearty bout.

The sheriff looking round about
Among eight hundred men,
He could not see the sight that he
Had long expected then.

"Ay," quoth the sheriff and scratched his head
"I thought he would be here,
Well I thought he would but though he's bold
He dares not now appear."

Those words struck Robin to the heart
They rankled in his blood,
"E'er long," thought he, "And thou shalt see
That here was Robin Hood."

*Derry down, derry dee, derry nye dee dyedle doo
Down derry nye dee dyedle a day,
Derry down, derry dee, derry nye dee dyedle doo
Down derry nye, dyedle day.*

There never was a more gallant match
Or so 'tis often said,
Those greenwood men missed not one in ten
Their aim was sure and dead.

And the arrow with the golden head

And shaft of silver white,
Brave Robin won and bore with him
For his own proper right.

The outlaws then that very day
To shun all kind of doubt,
By three and four, no less, no more
As they came in went out.

Said Robin Hood, "My only care
Is how the sheriff may,
Know certainly that it was I
Who bore his prize away."

Said Little John, "My council good
Did take effect before,
So therefore now if you'll allow
I will advise once more."

"This I suggest," said Little John
"A letter to be penned,
And when 'tis done to Nottingham
We to the sheriff send."

"I'll stick it on an arrow's head
And shoot it into the town,
The mark shall show where it must go
Whenever it lights down."

*Derry down, derry dee, derry nye dee dyedle doo
Down derry nye dee dyedle a day,
Derry down, derry dee, derry nye dee dyedle doo
Down derry nye, dyedle day.*

The project it was full performed
The sheriff the letter had,
When it he read he scratched his head
And raved like one that's mad.

So we'll leave him chafing in his grease
Which will do him no good,
Now friends attend for here's the end
Of my tale of Robin Hood.

*Derry down, derry dee, derry nye dee dyedle doo
Down derry nye dee dyedle a day,
Derry down, derry dee, derry nye dee dyedle doo
Down derry nye, dyedle day.*

The Three Ravens

Child # 26

There were three ravens sat on a tree,
Down a down, hey, down a down,
There were three ravens sat on a tree,
With a down;
There were three ravens sat on a tree,
They were as black as they might be,
With a down, derry, derry, derry down down.

Then one of them said to his mate,
Down a down, hey, down a down,
Then one of them said to his mate,
With a down;
Then one of them said to his mate,
Oh where shall we our breakfast take?
With a down, derry, derry, derry down down.

Oh down in yonder green field,
Down a down, hey, down a down,
Oh down in yonder green field,
With a down;
Oh down in yonder green field,
There lies a knight slain 'neath his shield.
With a down, derry, derry, derry down down.

His hounds they lie down at his feed,
Down a down, hey, down a down,
His hounds they lie down at his feet,
With a down;
His hounds they lie down at his feet,
So well they do their master keep.
With a down, derry, derry, derry down down.

His hawks they fly so eagerly,
Down a down, hey, down a down,
His hawks they fly so eagerly,
With a down;
His hawks they fly so eagerly,
There is no fowl dare come him nigh.
With a down, derry, derry, derry down down.

Oh yonder comes a fallow doe,
Down a down, hey, down a down,

Oh yonder comes a fallow doe,
With a down;
Yonder comes a fallow doe,
As great with child as she might go.
With a down, derry, derry, derry down down.

She lifted up his bloody head,
Down a down, hey, down a down,
She lifted up his bloody head,
With a down;
She lifted up his bloody head,
And kiss'd his wounds that were so red.
With a down, derry, derry, derry down down.

She got him up upon her back,
Down a down, hey, down a down,
She got him up upon her back,
With a down;
She got him up upon her back,
And carried him to the earthen lake.
With a down, derry, derry, derry down down.

She buried him before the prime,
Down a down, hey down a down,
She buried him before the prime,
With a down;
She buried him before the prime,
She was dead herself ere eventime.
With a down, derry, derry, derry down down.

May God grant every gentleman,
Down a down, hey, down a down,
May God grant every gentleman,
With a down;
May God grant every gentleman,
Such hawks, such hounds, and such leman.
With a down, derry, derry, derry down down.

Scarborough Fair

Child # 2

Are you going to Scarborough fair
Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme,
Remember me to one who lives there
For she once was a true love of mine.

Tell her to make me a cambric shirt
Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme,
With neither seams nor fine needlework
And then she'll be a true love of mine.

Tell her to wash it in yonder dry well
Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme,
Where nary a drop of water e'er fell
And then she'll be a true love of mine.

Tell her to find me an acre of land
Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme,
Between the salt water and the sea sand
And then she'll be a true love of mine.

Tell her to plough it up with a lamb's horn
Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme,
And sow it o'er with a single peppercorn
And then she'll be a true love of mine.

Tell her to reap it with a sickle of leather
Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme,
And tie it up with a peacock's feather
And then she'll be a true love of mine.

If she tells me she can't I'll reply
Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme,
Then tell me that at least you will try
And then you will be a true love of mine.

Are you going to Scarborough fair?