## Alfred Noyes (1880-1959)

## 5 "Will Shakespeare's out like Robin Hood"

I.	
Will Shakespeare's out like Robin Hood	
With his merry men all in green,	
To steal a deer in Charlecote wood	
Where never a deer was seen.	
II.	
He's hunted all a night of June,	5
He's followed a phantom horn,	
He's killed a buck by the light of the moon,	
Under a fairy thorn.	
III.	
He's carried it home with his April-hearted band.	
There never was haunch so fine;	10
For this buck was born in Elfin-land	
And fed upon sops-in-wine.	
IV.	
This buck had browsed on elfin boughs	
Of rose-marie and bay,	
And he's carried it home to the little white house	15
Of sweet Anne Hathaway.	
V.	
"The dawn above your thatch is red!	
Slip out of your bed, sweet Anne!	
I have stolen a fairy buck," he said,	0.0
"The first since the world began.	20

VI.

"Roast it on a golden spit,
And see that it do not burn;
For we never shall feather the like of it
Out of the fairy fern."

	VII.	
She scarce had donned	her long white gown	25
And given him kiss	es four,	
When the surly Sheriff	f of Stratford-town	
Knocked at the littl	e green door.	
	VIII.	
They have gaoled swee	et Will for a poacher;	
But squarely he fro	nts the squire,	30
With "When did you he	ear in your woods of a deer?	
Was it under a fair:	y briar?"	
	IX.	
Sir Thomas he puffs, -	– "If God thought good	
My water-butt ran	with wine,	
Or He dropt me a buck	in Charlecote wood,	35
I wot it is mine, not	thine!	
	X.	
"If you would eat of elf	in meat,"	
Says Will, "you mus	st blow up your horn!	
Take your bow, and fea	ather the doe	
That's under the fa	iry thorn!	40
	XI.	
"If you would feast on	elfin food,	
You've only the way	y to learn!	
Take your bow and fea	ther the doe	
That's under the fa	iry fern!"	
	XII.	
They're hunting high, they're hunting low,		45
They're all away, av	wa <mark>y,</mark>	
With horse and hound	to feather the doe	
That's under the fa	iry spray!	
	XIII.	
Sir Thomas he raged!	Sir Thomas he swore!	
But all and all in va	ain,	50

For there never was deer in his woods before,

And there never would be again!

(From Ballads and Poems. Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1928)