

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,
“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.”

And there never would be again!

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