

A. C. Swinburne (1837-1909)

26 *Wearieswa'*

The wind wears ower the Wearieswa'  
To the right and the left hand;  
The wind wears ower by the Wearieswa'  
And under by the sea sand.

Every bolt in Wearieswa' 5  
Wi' siller was it sparred;  
Every gate in Wearieswa'  
Wi' red gold was it barred.

Every window in Wearieswa' 10  
It was hasped in nickal keen;  
Every bower in Wearieswa'  
It was set wi' rushes clean.

There wonneth a woman in the Wearieswa',  
A strong spell is her upon;  
He that shall kiss her mouth for love 15  
Of his life he is fordone.

There is nae man made of a woman  
As the grass grows and the corn,  
But gin he have kissed that lady's mouth  
Of his life he is forlorn. 20

Lord Robert is ridden to the Wearieswa'  
Between the low ling and the heather hie;  
A wind was comen out of Wearieswa'  
Between the hielands and the sea.

O whatten a wind is this weary wind, 25

A weary wind to me?  
It's neither a scart o' the mill-water,  
Nor yet a wind o' the sea.

Lady Janet looked ower by a little window,  
She was fain of any man; 30  
For the lack of love that was her in  
All her body was wan.

She laid her chin out ower the wa' stanes,  
All her body was weak;  
The tears fell over in her face wan, 35  
Betwixen mouth and cheek.

Gin I kissed that lady on her lips  
The bitter man would I be;  
Gin I kissed that lady on her hands twain  
'Twere pain of my body. 40

O gin ye should kiss my weary hands  
Your ken would be fu' sair;  
And gin ye should kiss my heavy mouth  
Your teen wad be mickle mair.

But ye'll gae down to yon wan water-side, 45  
Gar make a ship of ashen tree;  
And ye maun sail by seven ways  
Between the faem and the green sea.

The first water ye'll sail upon  
Men call it Wearieswyte; 50  
Whoso cometh to that water  
He shall have little delight.

The neist water ye'll sail upon  
Men call it Wearieswan;  
Whoso cometh to that water 55

He is nae sicker man.

The neist water ye'll sail upon  
Men call it Weariesway;  
Whos[o] cometh to that water  
He were the better away. 60

The neist water ye'll sail upon  
Men call it Wearieswoe;  
Whoso cometh to that water  
He shall neither stand nor go.

The neist water ye'll sail upon 65  
Men call it Weariesween;  
Whbso cometh to that water  
Of his body he shall have teen.

The neist water ye'll sail upon  
Men call it Weariesyett; 70  
Whoso cometh to that water  
An ill wonning he shall get.

The last water ye'll sail upon  
Men call it Wearieshead;  
Whoso cometh to that water 75  
It were better for him to be dead.

And gin the sair sea scathe you not  
Nor the sea-worms in the sea,  
This weary weird that is me upon  
Ye shall take off from me. 80

And gin the water win you not upon  
Ye shall have good harbouring  
When ye come back to Wearieswa'  
About the fair birk flowering.

And ye maun be yoursell alane 85  
And I with a' my men,  
And ye maun stand low down them amang  
To see if I shall you ken.

— Gin the wan water win me not upon  
Between the sea-banks and the sea, 90  
Then I'll come back for your sake, Janet —  
A token I'll hae wi' me.

But how shall ye be seen, Hynd Robert,  
O how shall ye be known,  
Amang so mony gentlemen 95  
That wear the gold alone?

— O where they wear the goodly bright gold  
I shall wear yellow and black;  
And a little green hood behind my hair  
To hang down at my back. 100

— But how shall ye be kent, Janet,  
Or how shall ye be seen,  
Among so many goodly ladies  
That ye maun gang between?

O where they wear a ring, Robert, 105  
I shall wear two or three;  
And a girdle with a fair white stane,  
And by that ye shall ken me.

And where they wear but yellow lammer,  
I shall wear siller sheen; 110  
And where they gang like a queen's handmaids,  
I shall gang like a queen.

A kell o' gowd abune my head

And a band abune my eebree,  
And in every o' them a jewel stone 115  
My witness for to be;

And half my kirtle of red sendal  
To hang down at my knee;  
And half my kirtle of brown sendal  
That shall be wrought to me. 120  
And the shoon on my feet of yellow samite  
And by that ye shall me see.

He's made him a ship o' the goodly ash  
The sides thereof were wan;  
The first water he sailed upon 125  
He was the heavier man.

A' the oars were wrought of gold  
And a' the sails of red;  
The last water he sailed upon  
He seemed he was but dead. 130

But he's won back to Wearieswa'  
That was hard on a great sea;  
His hair was fu' of the wan sea-water  
And he halted of his knee.

Between the sea and the sea-banks 135  
He's let his bonny ship stand;  
His clothes were fu' of the wan rain-water  
And he halted of his hand.

Oh I will draw to me a weed,  
A weed baith poor and low, 140  
And I will gang before my lady's face,  
To see if she will me know.

And he has drawn to him a weed,

A weed of yellow and black;  
But there was nae hood behind his hair 145  
To hang down at his back.

The first gate that he came to  
It was little for his delight;  
The knappies that were that gate upon  
They were hewn of siller white. 150

The last gate that he came by  
It was little for his ease ;  
Before he had well won ower it,  
The blood ran frae his knees.

The neist gate that he came by 155  
His comfort was waxen cold;  
Every bolt that gate within  
It was carven of red gold.

And he's gane up to the high chamber,  
He's found that lady there, 160  
The red sendal on her body,  
And the red gold in her hair.

And as he stood low and very low  
Amang these goodly men;  
He stood amang them hoodless, 165  
There was nae man did him ken.

And she spied him weel and very weel  
Gin she might his body see;  
O wha is yon gangs hoodless,  
For my love it mauna be. 170

And she sought weel and very weel  
Gin she might him behold;  
She was mair fain of his fair body

Than the rain is of the mould.

And a' the men that were her before 175  
They were red and nothing wan;  
And when she saw his goodly face,  
She weened it was another man.

And when she looked his face upon,  
It was wan and nothing red, 180  
And a' his hair was riven wi' rain  
That rained upon his head.

O ye'll take out yon hoodless man,  
That hirples on the marl;  
I thought it were my love, Hynd Robert, 185  
It is but a hireman carl.

And ye'll take out yon gangrel fellow  
That hirples on the clay;  
I thought it was my love, Hynd Robert,  
That hae been long away. 190

He's taen him down to yon wan water-stand,  
The tears feel ower his een;  
Before he was weel in his goodly ship  
The wind began to ween.

He's turned his face to the fair leeland, 195  
He was right fu' o' care;  
Before he was weel upon the sea,  
The water was waxen sair.

Ye'll cast me in the heavy water  
That is both green and black, 200  
And ye'll bind my feet with a twine of silk;  
Pray for the storms to slack.

Ye'll cast me in the weary water  
That is both green and grey,  
And ye'll bind my arms upon my back; 205  
Pray for the rains to stay.

And they've cast over his fair body  
In the water that was sae white;  
And they drove over before the wind  
A day's space and a night. 210

The first wave that cam nigh the ship  
It smote her in the side;  
And ever alas! quo' the ae first man,  
"This water is ill to bide!"

The neist wave that cam nigh the ship, 215  
It smote her in the head;  
"Haul round, haul round," quo' the eldest man,  
"This water maun be our deid!"

And they spied ower the wan sea wide  
To see gin ony halp might be; 220  
And then they saw him, Hynd Robert,  
That fleted upright in the sea.

And they spied out upon the sea,  
It was a weary water and wan;  
And there they saw him, Hynd Robert, 225  
That fleted as a living man.

"O whatten a weird is this, Hynd Robert,  
That is of your body,  
To fleet out ower in the easterin' wind  
That thraws upon the sea?" 230

The wind shall blow in the wan water,  
It shall never slack for me,

Till ye bring my lady to yon sea-sand,  
Cast her body in the sea.

The wind shall thraw in the wild water; 235  
I wot it shall never bide,  
Till ye bring that lady to your sea-banks,  
Cast her body ower the ship's side.

They've had that lady to yon sea-banks 240  
And ower by yon heather hie;  
They bound her hands before her face,  
Cast her body in the sea.

*1917*

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