

A. C. Swinburne (1837-1909)

2 *The Bloody Son*

“O where have ye been the morn sae late,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
O where have ye been the morn sae late?
And I wot I hae not anither.”

“By the water-gate, by the water-gate, 5
O dear mither.”

“And whatten kin’ o’ wark had ye there to make,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And whatten kin’ o’ wark had ye there to make?
And I wot I hae not anither.” 10

“I watered my steeds with water frae the lake,
O dear mither.”

“Why is your coat sae fouled the day,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
Why is your coat sae fouled the day? 15
And I wot I hae not anither.”

“The steeds were stamping sair by the weary banks of clay,
O dear mither.”

“And where gat ye thae sleeves of red,
My merry son, come tell me hither? 20
And where gat ye thae sleeves of red?
And I wot I hae not anither.”

“I have slain my brither by the weary waterhead,
O dear mither.”

“And where will ye gang to mak your mend, 25
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And where will ye gang to mak your mend?
And I wot I hae not anither.”

“The warldis way, to the warldis end,
O dear mither.” 30

“And what will ye leave your father dear,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And what will ye leave your father dear?
And I wot I hae not anither.”

“The wood to fell and the logs to bear,
For he’ll never see my body mair,
O dear mither.” 35

“And what will ye leave your mither dear,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And what will ye leave your mither dear?
And I wot I hae not anither.” 40

“The wool to card and the wool to wear,
For ye’ll never see my body mair,
O dear mither.”

“And what will ye leave for your wife to take,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And what will ye leave for your wife to take?
And I wot I hae not anither.” 45

“A goodly gown and a fair new make,
For she’ll do nae mair for my body’s sake,
O dear mither.” 50

“And what will ye leave your young son fair,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And what will ye leave your young son fair?
And I wot ye hae not anither.” 55

“A twiggen school-rod for his body to bear,
Though it garred him greet he’ll get nae mair,
O dear mither.”

“And what will ye leave your little daughter sweet,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And what will ye leave your little daughter sweet?” 60

And I wot ye hae not anither.”
“Wild mulberries for her mouth to eat,
She’ll get nae mair though it garred her greet,
O dear mither.” 65

“And when will ye come back frae roamin’,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And when will ye come back frae roamin’?
And I wot I hae not anither.”
“When the sunrise out of the north is comen,
O dear mither.” 70

“When shall the sunrise on the north side be,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
When shall the sunrise on the north side be?
And I wot I hae not anither.” 75
“When chuckie-stanes shall swim in the sea,
O dear mither.”

“When shall stanes in the sea swim,
My merry son, come tell me hither.
When shall stanes in the sea swim? 80
And I wot I hae not anither.”
“When birdies’ feathers are as lead therein,
O dear mither.”

“When shall feathers be as lead,
My merry son, come tell me hither? 85
When shall feathers be as lead?
And I wot I hae not anither.”
“When God shall judge between the quick and the dead,
O dear mither.”

1862

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