

William Hamilton (1704-54)

*1 The Braes of Yarrow*

- A. Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny bonny bride,  
    Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome marrow,  
Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny bonny bride,  
    And think nae mair on the Braes of Yarrow.
- B. Where gat ye that bonny bonny bride? 5  
    Where gat ye that winsome marrow?
- A. I gat her where I dare na weil be seen,  
    Puing the birks on the Braes of Yarrow.
- Weep not, weep not, my bonny bonny bride,  
    Weep not, weep not, my winsome marrow; 10  
Nor let thy heart lament to leive  
    Puing the birks on the Braes of Yarrow.
- B. Why does she weep, thy bonny bonny bride?  
    Why does she weep thy winsome marrow?  
And why dare ye nae mair weil be seen 15  
    Puing the birks on the Braes of Yarrow?
- A. Lang maun she weep, lang maun she, maun she weep,  
    Lang maun she weep with dule and sorrow;  
And lang maun I nae mair weil be seen  
    Puing the birks on the Braes of Yarrow. 20
- For she has tint her luvver, luvver dear,  
    Her luvver dear, the cause of sorrow;  
And I hae slain the comliest swain  
    That eir pu'd birks on the Braes of Yarrow.
- Why rins thy stream, O Yarrow, Yarrow, reid? 25  
    Why on thy braes heard the voice of sorrow?

And why yon melancholious weids  
Hung on the bonny birks of Yarrow?

What's yonder floats on the rueful rueful flude?  
What's yonder floats? O dule and sorrow! 30  
O 'tis he the comely swain I slew  
Upon the duleful Braes of Yarrow.

Wash, O wash his wounds, his wounds in tears,  
His wounds in tears with dule and sorrow;  
And wrap his limbs in mourning weids, 35  
And lay him on the Braes of Yarrow.

Then build, then build, ye sisters, sisters sad,  
Ye sisters sad, his tomb with sorrow;  
And weep around in waeful wise  
His hapless fate on the Braes of Yarrow. 40

Curse ye, curse ye, his useless, useless shield,  
My arm that wrought the deed of sorrow,  
The fatal spear that pierc'd his breast,  
His comely breast on the Braes of Yarrow.

Did I not warn thee, not to, not to luvè? 45  
And warn from fight? but to my sorrow  
Too rashly bauld a stronger arm  
Thou mett'st, and fell'st on the Braes of Yarrow.

Sweet smells the birk, green grows, green grows the grass,  
Yellow on Yarrow's bank the gowan, 50  
Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,  
Sweet the wave of Yarrow flowan.

Flows Yarrow sweet? as sweet, as sweet flows Tweed,  
As green its grass, its gowan as yellow,  
As sweet smells on its braes the birk, 55  
The apple frae its rock as mellow.

Fair was thy luvè, fair fair indeed thy luvè,  
In flow'ry bands thou didst him fetter;  
Tho' he was fair, and well beluv'd again  
Than me he never luv'd thee better. 60

Busk ye, then, busk, my bonny bonny bride,  
Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome marrow,  
Busk ye, and luvè me on the banks of Tweed,  
And think nae mair on the Braes of Yarrow.

C. How can I busk a bonny bonny bride, 65  
How can I busk a winsome marrow,  
How luvè him upon the banks of Tweed,  
That slew my luvè on the Braes of Yarrow?

O Yarrow fields, may never never rain,  
Nor dew thy tender blossoms cover, 70  
For there was basely slain my luvè,  
My luvè, as he had not been a lover.

The boy put on his robes, his robes of green,  
His purple vest, 'twas my awn sewing:  
Ah! wretched me! I little, little kenn'd 75  
He was in these to meet his ruin.

The boy took out his milk-white, milk-white steed,  
Unheedful of my dule and sorrow:  
But ere the toofall of the night  
He lay a corps on the Braes of Yarrow. 80

Much I rejoyc'd that waeful waeful day;  
I sang, my voice the woods returning:  
But lang ere night the spear was flown,  
That slew my luvè, and left me mourning.

What can my barbarous barbarous father do, 85

But with his cruel rage pursue me?  
 My lover's blood is on thy spear,  
 How canst thou, barbarous man, then wooe me?

My happy sisters may be, may be proud  
 With cruel, and ungentle scoffin', 90  
 May bid me seek on Yarrow's Braes  
 My lover nailed in his coffin.

My brother Douglas may upbraid, upbraid,  
 And strive with threatning words to muve me:  
 My lover's blood is on thy spear, 95  
 How canst thou ever bid me luv thee?

Yes, yes, prepare the bed, the bed of luv,  
 With bridal sheets my body cover,  
 Unbar, ye bridal maids, the door,  
 Let in the expected husband lover. 100

But who the expected husband husband is?  
 His hands, methinks, are bath'd in slaughter:  
 Ah me! what ghastly spectre's yon  
 Comes in his pale shroud, bleeding after?

Pale as he is, here lay him, lay him down, 105  
 O lay his cold head on my pillow;  
 Take aff, take aff these bridal weids,  
 And crown my careful head with willow.

Pale tho' thou art, yet best, yet best beluv'd,  
 O could my warmth to life restore thee! 110  
 Yet lye all night between my breists,  
 No youth lay ever there before thee.

Pale, pale indeed, O lovely lovely youth,  
 Forgive, forgive so foul a slaughter,  
 And lye all night between my breists, 115

No youth shall ever lye there after.

A. Return, return, O mournful, mournful bride,  
Return and dry thy useless sorrow:  
Thy luvver heeds none of thy sighs,  
He lyes a corps in the Braes of Yarrow. 120

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