

William Motherwell (1797-1835)

14 *True Love's Dirge*

Some love is light and fleets away,  
    Heigho! the Wind and Rain;  
Some love is deep and scorns decay,  
    Ah, well-a-day! in vain.

Of loyal love I sing this lay, 5  
    Heigho! the Wind and Rain;  
'Tis of a knight and lady gay,  
    Ah, well-a-day! bright twain.

He loved her — heart loved ne'er so well, 10  
    Heigho! the Wind and Rain;  
She was a cold and proud damsel,  
    Ah, well-a-day! and vain.

He loved her — oh, he loved her long, 15  
    Heigho! the Wind and Rain;  
But she for love gave bitter wrong,  
    Ah, well-a-day! Disdain!

It is not meet for knight like me, 20  
    Heigho! the Wind and Rain;  
Though scorned, love's recreant to be,  
    Ah, well-a-day! Refrain.

That brave knight buckled to his brand,  
    Heigho! the Wind and Rain;  
And fast he sought a foreign strand,  
    Ah, well-a-day! in pain.

He wandered wide by land and sea, 25  
    Heigho! the Wind and Rain;  
A mirror of bright constancye,  
    Ah, well-a-day! in vain.

He would not chide, he would not blame, 30  
    Heigho! the Wind and Rain;

But at each shrine he breathed her name,  
Ah, well-a-day! Amen!

He would not carpe, he would not sing,  
Heigho! the Wind and Rain;  
But broke his heart with love-longing, 35  
Ah, well-a-day! poor brain.

He scorned to weep, he scorned to sigh,  
Heigho! the Wind and Rain;  
But like a true knight he could die —  
Ah, well-a-day! life's vain. 40

The banner which that brave knight bore,  
Heigho! the Wind and Rain;  
Had scrolled on it "Faith Evermore,"  
Ah, well-a-day! again.

That banner led the Christian van, 45  
Heigho! the Wind and Rain;  
Against Seljuck and Turcoman,  
Ah, well-a-day! bright train.

The fight was o'er, the day was done,  
Heigho! the Wind and Rain; 50  
But lacking was that loyal one —  
Ah, well-a-day! sad pain.

They found him on the battle-field,  
Heigho! the Wind and Rain;  
With broken sword and cloven shield, 55  
A[h,] well-a-day! in twain.

They found him pillowed on the dead,  
Heigho! the Wind and Rain;  
The blood-soaked sod his bridal bed,  
Ah, well-a-day! the Slain. 60

On his pale brow, and paler cheek,  
Heigho! the Wind and Rain;  
The white moonshine did fall so meek —  
Ah, well-a-day! sad strain.

They lifted up the True and Brave, 65  
Heigho! the Wind and Rain;  
And bore him to his lone cold grave,  
Ah, well-a-day! in pain.

They buried him on that far strand,  
Heigho! the Wind and Rain; 70  
His face turned towards his love's own land,  
Ah, well-a-day! how vain.

The wearied heart was laid at rest,  
Heigho! the Wind and Rain;  
To dream of her it liked best, 75  
Ah, well-a-day! again.

They nothing said, but many a tear,  
Heigho! the Wind and Rain;  
Rained down on that knight's lowly bier,  
Ah, well-a-day! amain. 80

They nothing said, but many a sigh,  
Heigho! the Wind and Rain;  
Told how they wished like him to die,  
Ah, well-a-day! sans stain.

With solemn mass and orison, 85  
Heigho! the Wind and Rain;  
They reared o'er him a cross of stone,  
Ah, well-a-day! in pain.

And on it graved with daggers bright,  
Heigho! the Wind and Rain; 90  
Here lies a true and gentle Knight,  
Ah, well-a-day! Amen!

requiescat. in. pace.

1832

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