

William Motherwell (1797-1835)

3 *The Ettin o' Sillarwood*

“O, Sillarwood! sweet Sillarwood,
Gin Sillarwood were mine,
I'd big a bouir in Sillarwood
And theik it ower wi' thyme;
At ilka door, and ilka bore, 5
The red, red rose, wud shine!”

It's up and sang the bonnie bird,
Upon her milk-white hand —
“I wudna lig in Sillarwood,
For all a gude Earl's land; 10
I wudna sing in Sillarwood,
Tho' gowden glist ilk wand!”

“The wild boar rakes in Sillarwood,
The buck drives thro' the shaw,
And simmer woos the Southern wind 15
Thro' Sillarwood to blaw.
“Thro' Sillarwood, sweet Sillarwood,
The deer hounds run so free;
But the hunter stark of Sillarwood
An Ettin lang is he!” 20

“O, Sillarwood! sweet Sillarwood,”
Fair Marjorie did sing,
“On the tallest tree in Sillarwood,
That Ettin lang will hing!”

The Southern wind it blows fu' saft, 25
And Sillarwood is near;
Fair Marjorie's sang in Sillarwood,
The stark hunter did hear.

He band his deer hounds in their leash,
Set his bow against a tree, 30

And three blasts on his horn has brocht
The wood elf to his knee.

“Gae bring to me a shapely weed,
Of silver and of gold,
Gae bring to me as stark a steed, 35
As ever stepped on mold;
For I maun ride frae Sillarwood
This fair maid to behold!”

The wood elf twisted sun-beams red
Into a shapely weed, 40
And the tallest birk in Sillarwood
He hewed into a steed;
And shod it wi’ the burning gold
To glance like ony glede.

The Ettin shook his bridle reins 45
And merrily they rung,
For four and twenty sillar bells
On ilka side were hung.

The Ettin rade, and better rade,
Some thretty miles and three, 50
A bugle horn hung at his breast,
A lang sword at his knee;
“I wud I met,” said the Ettin lang,
“The maiden Marjorie!”

The Ettin rade and better rade 55
Till he has reached her bouir,
And there he saw fair Marjorie
As bricht as lily flourir.

“O Sillarwood! — Sweet Sillarwood! —
Gin Sillarwood were mine, 60
The sleuthest hawk o’ Sillarwood
On dainty flesh wud dine!”

“Weel met, weel met,” the Ettin said,
“For ae kiss o’ that hand,

I wud na grudge my kist o' gold 65
 And forty fees o' land!

“Weel met, weel met,” the Ettin said,
 “For ae kiss o' that cheek,
 I'll big a bower wi' precious stanes,
 The red gold sal it theik: 70

“Weel met, weel met,” the Ettin said,
 “For ae kiss o' thy chin,
 I'll welcome thee to Sillarwood
 And a' that grows therein!”

“If ye may leese me Sillarwood 75
 Wi' a' that grows therein,
 Ye're free to kiss my cheek,” she said,
 “Ye're free to kiss my chin —
 The Knight that hechts me Sillarwood
 My maiden thocht sal win! 80

“My luvie I've laid on Sillarwood —
 Its bonnie aiken tree —
 And gin that I hae Sillarwood
 I'll link alang wi' thee!”

Then on she put her green mantel 85
 Weel furred wi' minivere:
 Then on she put her velvet shoon,
 The silver shining clear.

She proudly vaulted on the black —
 He bounded on the bay — 90
 The stateliest pair that ever took
 To Sillarwood their way!

It's up and sang the gentil bird
 On Marjorie's fair hand —
 “I wudna wend to Sillarwood 95
 For a' its timbered land —
 Nor wud I lig in Sillarwood
 Tho' gowden glist ilk wand!

“The Hunters chace thro’ Sillarwood
The playfu’ herte and rae; 100
Nae maiden that socht Sillarwood
E’er back was seen to gae!”

The Ettin leuch, the Ettin sang,
He whistled merrilie,
“If sic a bird,” he said, “were mine, 105
I’d hing it on a tree.”

“Were I the Lady Marjorie,
Thou hunter fair but free,
My horse’s head I’d turn about,
And think nae mair o’ thee!” 110

It’s on they rade, and better rade —
They shimmered in the sun —
’Twas sick and sair grew Marjorie
Lang e’er that ride was done!

Yet on they rade, and better rade, 115
They neared the Cross o’ stane —
The tall Knicht when he passed it by
Felt cauld in every bane.

But on they rade, and better rade,
It evir grew mair mirk, 120
O loud, loud nichered the bay steed
As they passed Mary’s Kirk!

“I’m wearie o’ this eerie road,”
Maid Marjorie did say —
“We canna weel get Sillarwood 125
Afore the set o’ day!”

“It’s no the sinkin’ o’ the sun
That gloamins sae the ground,
The heicht it is o’ Sillarwood
That shadows a’ around.” 130

“Methocht, Sir Knicht, broad Sillarwood
A pleasant bield wud be,
With nuts on ilka hazel bush,
And birds on ilka tree —
But oh! the dimness o’ this wood 135
Is terrible to me!”

“The trees, ye see, seem wondrous big,
The branches wondrous braid,
Then marvel nae if sad suld be
The path we hae to tread!” 140

Thick grew the air, thich grew the trees,
Thick hung the leaves around,
And deeper did the Ettin’s voice
In the dread dimness sound —
“I think,” said Maiden Marjorie, 145
“I hear a horn and hound!”

“Ye weel may hear the hound,” he said,
“Ye weel may hear the horn,
For I can hear the wild halloo
That freichts the face o’ Morn!” 150

“The Hunters fell o’ Sillarwood
Hae packs full fifty-three:
They hunt all day, they hunt all nicht,
They never bow an ee:

“The Hunters fell o’ Sillarwood 155
Hae steeds but blude or bane:
They bear fiert maidens to a weird
Where mercy there is nane!

“And I the Laird o’ Sillarwood
Hae beds baith deep and wide, 160
(Of clay-cauld earth) whereon to streik
A proud and dainty bride!

“Ho! look beside yon bonny birk —
The latest blink of day

Is gleamin' on a comely heap 165
Of freshly dug red clay;

“Richt cunning hands they were that digged
Forenent the birken tree
Where every leaf that draps, frore maid,
Will piece a shroud for thee — 170
It's they can lie on lily breast
As they can lie on lea!

“And they will hap thy lily breist
Till flesh fa's aff the bane —
Nor tell thy freres how Marjorie 175
To Sillarwood hath gane!

“The bed is strewed, Maid Marjorie,
Wi' bracken and wi' brier,
And ne'er will gray cock clarion wind
For ane that slumbers here — 180
Ye wedded have the Ettin stark —
He rules the Realms of Fear!”

1832

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