

William Motherwell (1797-1835)

8 *Lord Archibald*

A Ballad

O saftlie, saftlie laie him doun, and hap upo' his heid  
The cauld reid erd ful lichtlie feris, this is a knichtlie rede;  
And pight a carvit croce of stane abune quhare he dois lye,  
Syne it was for the halie rude Lord Archibald did die.

Its saftlie, saftlie have thay layd Lord Archibald in graif, 5  
And its dowie, dowie owre his bouk thair plumis and banneris waif;  
And its lichtlie, lichtlie doe thay hap the red erth on his heid;  
And waefil was ilk knichtly fere to luik upon the deid.

Thay layd him doun wi' sighe and sab, and they layd him doun wi' tearis;  
And nou abune the Olyve wuddis the ice-cauld mune apperis; 10  
Quhyl thai muntit on thayr stedis amayne a sorrowand cumpanie,  
And be the munelicht forthy thai begin a lang jornie[.]

Awa thai rade, away thai rade, and the wynd souchit eerie by,  
And quhiskit aff ilk heavie tere quhilk gatherit in thair eye;  
For weil thay luvit Lord Archibald as knichtis suld luvie thair feris; 15  
But littil thai affect Syr Hew, quha now thair fealtie bearis.

Its thai have spurrit, and egre spurrit, and thair stedes ar al a fome,  
And nevir a word frae anie lip of thir silent knichtis hes come;  
And still they spurrit and pukit on, til a lonesum lodge they wan,  
Then voydit thae thair saddilis al, and til the yett thay ran. 20

Nae licht is schinand in the lodge, and nae portir keepis the dore;  
Nae warder strade, wi lustie spere, that dreirie lodge before;  
Nae harp is heard inurth the hall, and nae sang frae ladie braive,  
But al was quiet as Ermites houff, and stylliche as the grave.

Swith pacit thai in be twa and twa, ilk wi his outdrawn swerd, 25  
And thai gang throu vaultit passages, albeit nae sound thay heard,  
Bot and it was the heavy clamp quhilk thair fit rang on the flore,  
Til that thay stude, ilk knicht of them, forntes the grit hall dore.

Now enter thou, the bauld Syr Hew, for treason do we feare;  
Now entir first, as Captaine thou, of your brithern knichtis sae dier; 30  
For syne the gude Lord Archibald was layd aneth the stane,  
Our manlyke courage has yfled, and al our hertis have gane.

The dark Sir Hew gade on before, and ane yreful man was he;  
“Oh, schame upon your manheidis al, and dishonour on ye be;  
“Quhat fleyis ye sua that nane may daur to threuw this chalmer lok;” 35  
Then wi’ his iron gauntlet he that aiken dore has broke.

“Come in, Syr Hew; come in, Syr Hew;” a voice cryit fra within;  
“Come in, Syr Hew, my buirdly bairn, quhilk are sua wicht and grim,  
“But nevir nane sal entir here bot an yoursel alane;  
“Now welcum blythe to dark Sir Hew in this puir lodge of stane.” 40

Ilk knicht did hear the lonsum voyce, but the speiker nane did see,  
And dark Syr Hew waxit deadlie pale, quhyl the mist cam owre his ee.  
“Now turn wi’ me, my merrie men al, to hald us on our way,  
“For in this ugsum lodge this nicht nae pilgrimer may stay.”  
“Come back, Syr Hew, my knicht of grace, and come hither my trusty fere; 45  
“For thou hast wan a gudely fee, though nae lerges ye mote spere:  
“Oh, three woundis were on your britheris face, and three abune his knee,  
“But the deepest wound was throu his hert, and that was gi’en be thee.”

Ilk ane has heard the lonesum voyce, for it was schil and hie;  
Ilk ane has heard its eerie skreich as it gaed souning by; 50  
Yet mervailous dul that lodge dois seem, and bot anie bruit or din;  
Nae liand wicht dois herbour here but an that voyce within.

And everie knicht has turnit him round to leave that hauntit ha’,  
And muntit on his swelterand stede, and pricket richt sune awa’;  
And quhan this gallant cumpanye auld Askelon had nearit, 55  
The wan mune had gane fra the lift, and the grai daylight apperit.

Then did they count thair numberis, and thay countit wyse and true,  
And everilk ane was thair convenit bot and the dark Syr Hew;  
But in the press his horse was kythit wi’ ane saddil toom and bare;  
Och and alace, its maister sure liggis in som lanelie lair. 60

Back hae thay ridden league and myl, but nevir Syr Hew thai see;

Back hae thay ridden league and myl til quhare that lodge suld be;  
Och and alace, nae lodge is thair, nouthir of stane nor wud,  
But quhair it was lay the dark Syr Hew amid thick clatterit blude.

His lyre was wan, his teeth were clencht, and his eyne did open stare,       65  
And wonderouslie lyke stiffened cordis stude up his coal-black hair,  
And his hand was glewit until the haft of his swerd sue scharp and trew,  
Bot the blade was broke, and on the grund it lay in pieces two.

He streiket was upon the garse, and it was red of blee,  
Wi' the drappyng of the ruddie blude that trinklitt doun his knee;       70  
And his brunie bricht was dintit sair, and heart in pieces ten,  
O nevir was a knicht sae hackit by armis of mortal men.

Thay sayit to raise him, bot alace, thai culd not muve a limm;  
But heavie as the lead he lay, that Captaine dark and brym;  
And his eye was luik, and fierslie fell, and his hand was rased a lite,       75  
Albeit no lyf was in the corps of that cauld paly knighte.

Then did thay leave him on that spot to rot and fal away,  
And thay put na stane upon his heid, and on his corps nae clay,  
For thay had lerit in ferly wise that hindernicht I rede,  
That dark Syr Hew, by felon means, did make his brither bleed.       80

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