

Thomas Love Peacock (1785-1866)

3 *The Friar of Rubygill*

It was a friar of orders free,  
A friar of Rubygill:  
At the greenwood-tree a vow made he,  
But he kept it very ill:  
A vow made he of chastity, 5  
But he kept it very ill.  
He kept it, perchance, in the conscious shade  
Of the bounds of the forest wherein it was made:  
But he roamed where he listed, as free as the wind,  
And he left his good vow in the forest behind: 10  
For its woods out of sight were his vow out of mind,  
With the friar of Rubygill.

In lonely hut himself he shut,  
The friar of Rubygill;  
Where the ghostly elf absolved himself, 15  
To follow his own good-will:  
And he had no lack of canary sack,  
To keep his conscience still.  
And a damsel well knew, when at lonely midnight  
It gleamed on the waters, his signal-lamp-light: 20  
'Over! over!' she warbled with nightingale throat,  
And the friar sprung forth at the magical note,  
And she crossed the dark stream in his trim ferry-boat,  
With the friar of Rubygill.

1822

(From *The Poems of Thomas Love Peacock*. Ed. Brimley Johnson. London: George Routledge & Sons, 1907)