

A. C. Swinburne (1837-1909)

12 *A Fragment of a Border Ballad*

Duke Loys is set on his bridge-way,  
He held by the hand a right fair may,  
“Ye’ll give me a knight of little birth,  
That is not well six tyrants worth.”

“Oh, I will have him certainly, 5  
Despite my mother that carried me;  
Despite friend, and brother also,  
And you, my father, that I love so.”

“Daughter, put this love aside,  
Or in the tower ye maun bide,” 10  
“I more liefer in the tower abide  
Than I would set this love aside.”

“Put in my daughter out of light,  
That she shall think all days be night.”  
There was gone out the seventh year 15  
When he went in to talk with her.

“Good morrow, daughter, how fare you?”  
“Ill fares it, father, to say true;  
The earth has rotten away my feet,  
And the worms have gotten my sides to eat.” 20

“Daughter, put thy love aside,  
Or in the tower ye must bide.”  
“I had liefer in the tower abide,  
Father, than set my love aside.”

1916

(From *Ballads of the English Border*. Ed. with Introduction,  
Glossary and Notes by William A. MacInnes. London:  
William Heinemann, 1925)