

A. C. Swinburne (1837-1909)

21 *A Lyke-Wake Song*

Fair of face, full of pride,  
Sit ye down by a dead man's side.

Ye sang songs a' the day:  
Sit down at night in the red worm's way.

Proud ye were a' day long: 5  
Ye'll be but lean at evensong.

Ye had gowd kells on your hair:  
Nae man kens what ye were.

Ye set scorn by the silken stuff:  
Now the grave is clean enough. 10

Ye set scorn by the rubis ring:  
Now the worm is a saft sweet thing.

Fine gold and blithe fair face,  
Ye are come to a grimly place.

Gold hair and glad grey een, 15  
Nae man kens if ye have been.

1877

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