

A. C. Swinburne (1837-1909)

2 *The Bloody Son*

“O where have ye been the morn sae late,  
My merry son, come tell me hither?  
O where have ye been the morn sae late?  
And I wot I hae not anither.”  
“By the water-gate, by the water-gate, 5  
O dear mither.”

“And whatten kin’ o’ wark had ye there to make,  
My merry son, come tell me hither?  
And whatten kin’ o’ wark had ye there to make?  
And I wot I hae not anither.” 10  
“I watered my steeds with water frae the lake,  
O dear mither.”

“Why is your coat sae fouled the day,  
My merry son, come tell me hither?  
Why is your coat sae fouled the day? 15  
And I wot I hae not anither.”  
“The steeds were stamping sair by the weary banks of clay,  
O dear mither.”

“And where gat ye thae sleeves of red,  
My merry son, come tell me hither? 20  
And where gat ye thae sleeves of red?  
And I wot I hae not anither.”  
“I have slain my brither by the weary waterhead,  
O dear mither.”

“And where will ye gang to mak your mend, 25  
My merry son, come tell me hither?  
And where will ye gang to mak your mend?  
And I wot I hae not anither.”

“The warldis way, to the warldis end,  
O dear mither.” 30

“And what will ye leave your father dear,  
My merry son, come tell me hither?  
And what will ye leave your father dear?  
And I wot I hae not anither.”  
“The wood to fell and the logs to bear, 35  
For he’ll never see my body mair,  
O dear mither.”

“And what will ye leave your mither dear,  
My merry son, come tell me hither?  
And what will ye leave your mither dear? 40  
And I wot I hae not anither.”  
“The wool to card and the wool to wear,  
For ye’ll never see my body mair,  
O dear mither.”

“And what will ye leave for your wife to take, 45  
My merry son, come tell me hither?  
And what will ye leave for your wife to take?  
And I wot I hae not anither.”  
“A goodly gown and a fair new make,  
For she’ll do nae mair for my body’s sake, 50  
O dear mither.”

“And what will ye leave your young son fair,  
My merry son, come tell me hither?  
And what will ye leave your young son fair?  
And I wot ye hae not anither.” 55  
“A twiggen school-rod for his body to bear,  
Though it garred him greet he’ll get nae mair,  
O dear mither.”

“And what will ye leave your little daughter sweet,  
My merry son, come tell me hither? 60  
And what will ye leave your little daughter sweet?

And I wot ye hae not anither.”  
“Wild mulberries for her mouth to eat,  
She’ll get nae mair though it garred her greet,  
O dear mither.” 65

“And when will ye come back frae roamin’,  
My merry son, come tell me hither?  
And when will ye come back frae roamin’?  
And I wot I hae not anither.”  
“When the sunrise out of the north is comen,  
O dear mither.” 70

“When shall the sunrise on the north side be,  
My merry son, come tell me hither?  
When shall the sunrise on the north side be?  
And I wot I hae not anither.” 75  
“When chuckie-stanes shall swim in the sea,  
O dear mither.”

“When shall stanes in the sea swim,  
My merry son, come tell me hither.  
When shall stanes in the sea swim? 80  
And I wot I hae not anither.”  
“When birdies’ feathers are as lead therein,  
O dear mither.”

“When shall feathers be as lead,  
My merry son, come tell me hither? 85  
When shall feathers be as lead?  
And I wot I hae not anither.”  
“When God shall judge between the quick and the dead,  
O dear mither.”

1862

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Glossary and Notes by William A. MacInnes. London: William  
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