

The Wyffe of Ezdel-more

By James Hogg

FYTTE THE FYRSTE

There dwallit ane wyffe in Ezdel-more
Ane wonderous wyffe I wot wals she
Fore sho halde the wanyerthlye lore
Of wytchcrafte and of glaumorye

And sho colde blenche the blomying cheike
And sho colde blynde the bauldest ee
For sho colde maike the wyndis to speike
And the breizes laughe outower the le

And the lassies and the ladis gaed geyte
Theye dauncit theye caperit and theye sung
Then laughit quhille teris ranne downe theyre cheikis
Yet knowit not qhare the sporte had sprung

And sho colde bid the sternis stande stille
Als glowyng up the heuinlye lonis
And the sternyis blynkkit with affrychte
And stode als stille as they'd beine stonis

Sho brochte the egillis from the rockis
And snoolit them in hir curset pennis
Sho turnit the shepherdis to morecockis
And the prettye maydenis to morehennis

Then there wals blynking on the bente
And flapperyng owen the purpil fellis
For the braif creturis were intende
On toying mid the hadder bellis

At moultynge tymis there wals deraye
Als the aulde damis haif taulde to me
For all that theye colde doo or saye
The morecockis woide not lette them bee

But yet there grewe soche raige for chainge
That the wytche wyffe wals sore besette
For euery morne the men and maydis
Were throngyng at hir synfulle yette

And the morehennis biggit theyre louesome nestis
Amang the bellis of blomying lyng
And theyre loferis skailit the momying mystis
And crawit upon the wanton wyng

Quhille it felle about the Lammas tyde
Quhan the moreland men doo wonne theyre haye
That the lairde of Gilbertoun hathe hyit
To hount upon these mountanis gnaye

Als hee caime downe the Caldron brae
He callit until his braif dog Colle
Quhais taille wals standyng out als straighte
Als nedyl to the norlan polle

His ee wals sette and his fote wals up
And his lippe wals clypping in the sloate
And his heidd wals on his sholder tunnit
It wals a sychte wals worthe ane groate

“Holde on braif boye” cryis Gilbertoun
The dog helde on ane iyttil space
Then he begoude to yuff and barke
And terroure strainge wals in his faice

“Hold on braif boye” cryis Gilbertoun
“No maister braif be your’s the paint
There’s somethyng in that hadder browne
That frychtis mee to the very herte”

He toke his taille betwene his leggis
And up the penne he ranne with speidde
And aye hee gaif the tidder yelp
Als one had smotte him on the heidde

“The doggis bewytchit” sayis Gilbertoun
“Or els the deuil is in that denne
It maikis myne verye herte tille quaike
Yet quhat to dreidde I lyttill kenne”

Hee raysit his doghedis brychte and keine
And on he helde courageouslye
Yet there wals sumthyng in his eyne
That haflins hyndenit him to se

Then up there sprang ane goodlye braice
Two fyner burdis neuir beatte the ayre
Thump! thump! went Gilbertounis two shottis
And down caime bothe the cumlye payre

“Seike deidde seike deidde myne braif dog Colle
Come downe hens gallante sporte for the”
“Thank youe sir Maister seike yourseile
For deuil ane helpe you’s gette from mee

The lairde helde on his burdis to lyfte
Soche grand begynnyng blythe to se
“Hold! Damme you sir!” sayis the morecocke
“How danit you shotte your gunnis at mee?”

The lairde got neuir soche ane flegge
Syn hee satte on his modenis kne
Hee flung his mosquette from his hande
And lyke ane madmanne offe ranne hee

But at the fyrste bewyidenit turne
He caime unto the wytchis denne
For sho leuit fame up in the Caldron burne
Far from the walkis of chrystian menne

In half ane housse and half ane caife
It wals ane firsum plaice to se
But in ranne the lairde of Gilbertoun
Als frychtenit als ane manne colde bee

“Sir keipe your distance” cryit the wyffe
“This daye I speike not withe youre kynde
So come not hydder for youre lyffe
Go morder all quhom you canne fynde

You are soche baisse wanbrydlit knaife
I am in payne quhille you depairt
There’s youthful biode upon youre heidde
And synne withynne youre verye herte”

Now this wytche wals not ane wyddenit hagge
Sho wals ane fayme and lordlye queinne
With maijestye in euery mofe
And glamoure in him coile blacke eyne

“Moste mervoullous and staitiye daime

That you are here astoundethe mee
That you sholde hue in soche ane haime
Fore passethe my capacitye

But heare and helpe mee if you maye
I'll showe you sychtis you neur sawe
Sumthyng hath fallen into myne waye
That fame owerpasseth Natunis lawe"

"I knowe it all" cryit the wytch wyffe
"Alace I knowe it all to weille
You haif shotte Tom Flemon of Blode-hope
And bonny Maye of Phynghlande-sheille

Och theye were iofenis fonde and leille
And of eiche odenis lofe so fayne
But theye wolde seye the monis a whyle
And deinlye haif theye payit the cayne

Come lette us go to worke of woe
And laye theyre hedis benethe the sode
That neur manne theyne synne maye knowe
Nor ferlye owen theyre laste abode"

Then sho toke oute ane wynding sheitte
Wals quhyter nor the cheystist snow
And theye are awaye to the Caldron Brae
To seike the lofenis lying low

"Now keipe you backe" the wytche wyffe sayit
"Keipe backe untihie I calle youre naimie
For it lyttii sutis the ee of manne
To ioke on vyrginis lyfelesse fraime"

Och quhan sho caime unto the spotte
It wals ane scene of muefulle skaithe
For Maye of Phynghlande-sheilie wals slayne
And him lofer weipyng faste to dethe

There neur wals soche and cumlye corpis
Layit out so meiklye and so low
And him bonnye skynne wals stmypit with blode
Lyke raynbowis on ane wrethe of snow

They dyggit him graife bee the wylde bumne side
Far from the sychte of mortyl ee

“I maike it wyde” Tom Flemon sayit
“That it maye holde bothe him and mee”

They dyggit him graife and lyit him in
And to diswadde him lofer tryit
But Tom Flemon crepit into the graife
And layit himselle downe bee him syde

Hee foidit his deidd lofe in his armis
And layit his heidde upon him breste
“Now couer us up” Tom Flemon cryit
“For this is the bedde I lyke the beste

I haif followit myne owne deire vyrginne lofe
Through yirth and ayre alake to faste
But I neuem possessit him quhille the gmaife
Hath giuen him to mee at the laste

Heire wille we lye in swete sounde sleippe
Quhille the laste momnyng open him ee
Then laye the gmeine sode on our heiddis
For this is quhare I lofe to bee”

Theye shovellit the moulde upon theyre feitte
And o’er theyre bmestis theye shovehhit it in
But lothe were theye to couer theyre hedis
Whyle there wals anye lyffe withynne

Then Tom Flemon toke ane long haste kysse
And hee lokit tih heuin and wepit fulle sore
Then closyt his eyne and beddit his heidde
Quhare it sholde lye for euirmore

Then theye couerit them up alyfe and deidde
Theye couenit them up juste as theye laye
Then layit the greine sode on the heidde
And sone the monyngis dyit awaye

And the lairde wepyt lyke ane verye chylde
In sore distresse and grefe of mynde
But the weirde wyffe in passione wylde
Pounit this wylde antheme on the wynde

The Wytchis Dirge

Adieu—Adieu

Sweet Spirits adieu
A kind farewell I send with you
As fond and fair
As ever you were
I see you pacing the fields of air
Away—Away
By the cloudlet gray
And the hues that mingle the night and the day
O'er valleys from which the dew descends
Where the glaring sunbeam never blends
But a gloaming dims the dell and river
And a holy stillness dwells for ever
Where the ruffling breeze
Never waves the trees
And the waters neither swell nor freeze
Where storms the soul can never harrow
Nor terrors of the lightening's arrow
Nor glances of delirious joy
Without illusion or alloy
But the lingering spirit's life is led
In a dreary hope and a holy dread
Till the last day
Shall pass away
Of hope of longing and dismay
When the doom is read that effaced is never
And the fates of spirits sealed for ever

Adieu—Adieu
Sweet spirits adieu
A kind farewell I send with you
To a land where I have lived approved
A land where I have sinned and loved
And thence was forced to earth's domain
To a body of flesh and blood again
For thrice as punishment condign
Has this unyielding soul of mine
Been driven away as being remiss
From verges of the fields of bliss
Downward away o'er fire and flood
To inherit mortal flesh and blood
But here above thy earthly shrine
I pray such fate be never thine
May you love and kiss
In dreamy bliss
In your home of slumbering quietness
And sometimes at the midnight noon

Climb the steep eyebrows of the moon
To watch her workings of commotion
That heave the tides of the earthly ocean
That torfel and roll her to and fro
Like surges of death in the world below
That call the mists to the fair moonshine
And the fresh sweet showers from the fields of brine
Then mark the workings of nature's strife
When the infant tempest springs to life
And how the bolts of burning levin
Are moulded in the forge of heaven
And far in flaming vengeance hurled
Away to world beyond world

O then how sweet your walks to renew
When the angels of night distil the dew
And sink to your sweet alcove again
In that benignant quiet reign
Where roses twine
With the eglantine
In the fairy bowers that once were mine
Adieu—Adieu
Sweet spirits adieu
A kind farewell I send with you

But the beste of myne taille is yet to bee
For James Glendonnyng hath tould it mee
And the trothe of James can neur faille
And so hath Tom Beattye of Meickyl-daille
That ane ghostlye morecocke and morehenne
Stille haunte the wyldis of the Caldmon glenne
At them no poynter wille turne his eye
But hangis his taille and passeth by
And nothyng awayleth the strongest shotte
For it passeth through them and hurteth notte
For both these blaidis mang oder crymis
Haif shotte at eiche ane thusande tymis
And euenilke yeirre at Lammas tydde
On a greine mounde by the wylde burn sydde
Maye these two bonnye burdis be seine
Sytyng in somrowe and in teine

FYTTE THE SECONDE

Now this wytche wyffe quhas yirdlye naime
Wals sayit to haif bein Raighel Graime

Hath wyhit the lairde unto him sheille
For sho sayit sho lofit his beimyng weille
Althoughe at firste he hadde some dreidde
That sho helde revenge intil him heidde
Sho toke him in with queenlye gmaice
And sho set him in ane honourit plaice
And sho tould him ane taille to him so newe
That hee scaircely colde believe it trewe

“Now listen to mee thou sportesman goode
Als thou waste histenyng for thyne lyffe
Thou shedder of young and guyltesse blode
Unto ane taille of storte and stryffe

And I moste telle it if I maye
For it wolde stille lyffls stormye euin
If but ane man on yird sholde knowe
The state that I stand in with heuin

About ane thusande yenis agone
I wals ane ladye of renowne
I wals myne fadenis darlyng bairne
Myne modenis lofe wals alle myne own

But it wals in ane synnfulle lande
That lysis beneathe the rysing sonne
Where the mychtie Aral rolhis her tydde
On shoris that freedome neuir wonne

And quhan I wonne myne youthfulle pryme
And lofit with alle a vymginis feimis
Myne fader sold mee for ane slaife
Regairdlesse of myne cmyis and tens

Hee solde me to ane mychtye kyng
To live ane lyffe I colde not leidde
For somethyng whyspenit mee withynne
That for soche lyffe I wals not maide

There is nochte in lyffe so swete als lofe
To lofe and bee belofit agayne
But to gif all to one we haite
There wellis the soulis deadlyeste payne

So I let out myne lordis hertis blode
Raither nor myne fre soule begryme

For I maither chusit to die ane mayde
Than yelde myne lyffe to haitful cryme

I bamnit the doris and windowis closse
I bamnit them alle myne selfe wythynne
And to his haram set ane cole
And joyit mee of the deadlye synne

Then all his wyffis and weicked daimis
Theye skirhit theye jompyt and they prayit
It wals and awsum dance of deathe
To all but one poore wrongit mayde

The wretches fledde before the flaime
And to ane chamber roshit pell-melle
Where enek queene and wicked daime
Were bymnit intill ane izel shelle

Myne bodye peryshit in that flaime
But to myne wonder and delychte
I found I wals a being stille
Pure als the snowis on Amalis heychte

A lychtsome lively lyving thing
A thyng without a form or naime
But alle myne energyis remaynit
And all my feillyngis were the saime

I dancit me o'er Mamorais isle
I dancit me o'er Mamora's sea
Then lychtit on ane guildit spyre
To watch quhat the evente wolde be

And there I saw myne wratchit horde
Quha fayne wolde haif debasit me
Borne off by thre malyshous fiendis
To euerlastyng slaiverie

And his wyffis and myngens passit in drovis
Awaye awaye to plaice unknowne
And the enekis snoolit up behynde
With wemyng stille to lose or wonne

Some of those damis were blacke als inke
And some of hue without a naime
But not one soul wals quhyte but myne

Of all quha peryshit in that flaime

I hied me awaye to the Aral shore
Myne parentis and true lofe to see
And saw myne fader riche in store
Of gayne he wonne be saille of me

And I cursit him in myne makeris naime
And shoke myne hande before his ee
But myne hand wals viewless als myne fraime
Myne soule he cold not hirre nor se

But my pore moderis herte wals broke
Sho sat and pinit fro morn till elm
And als she namit myne naime sho prayit
For blyssings on him chylde from heu,n

‘But we haif giuin him up till shaine
And o quhat bliss can him betyde
So I’ll go wayling to myne graife
That sho wals not ane virtuous bryde

Myne chylde myne lofe myne onlye joye
Deirre to this herte als deimre can bee
O we shalle rulle in bymning fyre
For skaith that we haif done to the’

I lokit intil myne pamentis ee
I sawe the teris rynne downe him cheike
I sawe the sobbis that hevit him breiste
And then I thought myne herte wolde break

But spyrits haif no hertis of flesche
Els myne had broke without remeide
I tryit him ee I tryit him eire
But wals not known by worde or deide

I went unto myne own true lofe
And found him at our trysting tine
And hee wals cnonyng owen ane saung
Of lofe that he had maide to mee

I kyssit his lyppis and comlye cheike
And on his manlye bosome laye
And if ane spyrit colde haif wepit
I wolde haif wepit myne lyfe awaye

But up there came an oder daimē
Quha's faice was rychte weihle knowne to mee
And all his lofe wals laivishit there
Efen undemnethe our trysting tīne

Then fondest dalliance passit betwēinne
Whyle I stode by and lokit on
I cursit them in the vyrginis naime
And wysheit myne being tumnit to stone

Och wolde the shaimeful sonnis of menne
But thynke of friendis deidde and gone
And thynke in seckret dedis of synne
That theye are standyng lokyng on

They dumste not stope to dedis profaine
If ponderyng on theyre frendis enshmynit
The eyes of spyritis lokyng on
Is dreddful to the hoomyn mynde

I tumnit myne faice unto the heuin
And to myselfe sayit grefouslye
'I moste go seike ane oder home
This is no nestyng plaice for mee'

But ane spyrit helde me by the hande
And did my boundyng flychte nestrayne
'You moste forgiue you moste forgiue'
Sayit hee 'or heuin you'll neur gayne'

'The herte that solde ane chylde for golde
The lofe that lastis but for ane daye
Though I in byrning flaimis bee rollit
These curses I shalle ne'er unsaye'

The spyrit shoke his golden hayres
And sayit out through aerial tens
'Och that unyeldyng soul of thyne
Moste pennance doo ane thousande yenis'

Now I haif roamit o'er dismal spheres
In darklyng plesure and in woe
Haif hivit with fairyis and theyre feris
Then dyvit into the depis belowe

Once to ane lychtsome lande I wonne
 Quhare plesure gan to maister payne
But there I lofit and there I synnit
 And wals expellit to yirth agayne

I haif livit in vyrgin wyffe and crone
 And stormit in ferce vimagois mynde
Livit lyke unyirthlye being lone
 But neur gaif byrthe to hoomyn kynde

I am not hoomyn nor dyvine
 But farre abofe frayle flesche and blode
For I haif elymental power
 That neur canne bee understoode

For I can bydde the stommis naive loudde
 And straighte they maine alangis the heuin
And I can bryng the thonder cloudde
 And swath it rounde the fyenie leuin

And I can skaille the egelhis neste
 And skaire him from his dyne soone
And I can wmyng his lordlye necke
 Betweine the quhyte cloudde and the moone

And I can stop the solanis flychte
 And barre him from his enterpryze
I with the raiven can converse
 And telle him where his quarrye lyis

I can turne ane manne intil ane beiste
 And gif him hornis of proper syze
Ane mayde into ane chermynng burde
 To frolycke through the summer skyis

Waik drousye slombemer! Waik in tyme
 Dare you myne wordis and workis despise
Who am ane mysterye sublime
 Ane wonder underneathe the skyis”

For this strainge quene had foamit and ravit
 And wafit hir armis so feirfullye
Sho neur noted that the lairde
 Wals sounde asleipe als manne colde bee

Until he gaif ane goodlye snore

That soundyt lyke ane postmanis borne
Then the wytch gaif him soche ane flegge
Als bee neuim gatte since bee wals borne

Sho gaif him ane skyffat on the cheike
That maide him spmyng to the bauke tine
“Hilloa—quhatis thys?” cryis out the lairde
“Daime dare you playe youre prankis on mee?

I had gode mynde to aske youre lofe
For you are ane lordlye lousome daime
But to let out your lordis hertis blode
I trow it wals ane mychte gmeate shaime

Praye haif you nothyng heimre to drynke
In that are joyis whiche neuir faille
I wolde naither haif some dnyne and funne
Than lyste to ane unyirthlye taille

Soche tailles als that I hope are fewe
Theye maike a manne bothe sycke and sadde
And if one colde belife them trewe
Theyre fytte to put ane body madde

Let us turn to yirthlye thyngis agayne
And fyrste se quhatis to drynke or eitte
For quhat with trobil toylle and payne
I haif great neidde of neste and meitte”

But quhat bee aitte or quhat hee dranke
Or quhare he slepit that nychte his lame
In sothe wals neuir meveahit to mee
There fore I telle it not agayne

FYTTE THE THRYDDE

The bonnye graye ee of the daye
Had scaircely hevit its drowzye lydde
Farre o’er the cistern hillis awaye
Through blushes of vermylhion reidde

Quhan up gat many a bmaif more cocke
Grand hoomyn gorcockis of renowne
And theye were nychemyng in the ayre
Als if the worlde was all theyne owne

Whyle all that eiche hadde to the fore
Wals ane swete maite of russet hewe
Sytyng gledgyng in him cozye neste
Amang the bellis of purpil blewe

The blacke cocke lockeryt on the brae
And spredde his taille lyke sylvem fanne
His motelye maite in humbil graye
Caime cownyng to bin proudde godemanne

And up gatte the wyffe of Ezdel-more
And the lairde of Gilbertoun up gatte hee
For theye heryt some voycis at the yette
Als swete als voycis welle colde bee

And quhan the lairde caime but the caive
From out his danke and drowzye denne
The grandyst daime stode him before
That euir wals seinne by eyne of menne

The lairde sanke downe upon his kne
In perfecte wonder and dismaye
But sho raisyt him up rychte countheouslye
And bade him neyther doo non saye

Sayis sho "I'll showe to you ane sychte
Wille sette youre tendir herte on flaime
And then I'll show ane oder sychte
Wille maike you chainge your mortyl fraime"

"Confounde mee maddam if I wille
And this I saye fulle certainlye
If euir I chainge myne mortyl frame
That change it shalle be maidde for the"

But forth sho saylit unto the yette
Lyke streimour of the rysing sonne
The nadiante weathergalle bewet
With dewis of heuin wals there outdonne

For there three lovelye vyrginis stode
Waityng to chainge theyre mortyl fraime
For jealousye had them betrayit
And forcit them intil mountain gaime

But quhan they saw ane gallante wychte

Ane gentle hynde of hie respect
Had been in madamis denne all nyghte
Theye blushit until the very necke

Ane quhispeinit “that moste be the deuill”
Ane oden sayit rychte pawkilye
“Then he is moche better nor he’s calhit
I haif seine wauin loking chaps nor bee

But bee hee manne on be he more
Or be hee worse than I can telle
This lustye wyffe of Ezdel-more
Is littil bettir non myselle

Myne herte it trembles me withynne
Yet from my purpose I’ll not fail
For I most haif myne lofe agayne
In spyte of poulder and of haille”

Then sayit the wyffe of Ezdel-more
“Come ane be ane myne bonnye thingis
But quhan the cloackyng tyme is o’er
You’ll rewe this langyng after wyngis”

The firste that caime wals Mary Roye
With blushes of the roses hue
Hir cheikis were dymplit o’er with joye
Hir eyne of heuinis owne awzer blewe

“Holde” cryit the lairde “This shalle not bee
Against this chainge I maik a vowe
Though bonnyer burde mochte neur flee
Sho is ten tymis sweter als she’s nowe

Gif up the moris myne prettye mayde
And come and spende ane monthe with mee
And I’ll cleide you from tope til toe
In goude and sylken cramasye”

But sho threw him ane wytching smyle
And sayit with womdis of languishyng
“The bonniest gowne in all our isle
Is ane that is callit the morehenis wyng”

The wyffe toke hirm ben to the caive
And there were cries of mickle paine

But quat wals done or quhat wals sayit
No mortal ewer toulde agayne

Then open flew the doome at last
And out she sprang in nature new
And bounded for the Black-coom heichte
The bonniest morehenne euir flewe

The lairde nanne on til ane knowe heidde
To keip the bonny bird in syghte
For he helde it ane precious meidde
To see quhane soche ane thyng wolde lychte

“Hah!” quod the laimde “I haif him now
I knowe him very bosche and denne
I’ll be ane moorecock als I vowe
To cowre besyde yonne sweite morehenne”

The next fayre daimde that toke the chainge
Wals Jane Deyelle of Bomrancleuch
Sho wals ane talle and sprychtelye lasse
With waifyng lockis of raiven hewe

The lairde he lokyt intil him eyne
Quhille sho wals fonicit to loke away
Thynkand he wolde them knowe agayne
Quhan meityng on the mountaine graye

The thmydde that caime wals Banbenry Blaike
In robis of snowye quhitenesse cladde
And quhan the laimde lokit in him faice
Him beautye almaste putte him madde

“Londe!” cryit the lairde “but this excedis
All thyngis that euir on yimthe befelle
This longing for the mountain heiddis
And yirnyng for the hadden belle

Ah lofelye mayden if to mee
So swete so fayre ane forme were giuen
I wolde not chainge its symmetnye
Saife for ane angelis of the heuin

Swyth! maithen staye at homme and breidde
Fayne hoomyn thyngis with hoomyn soulis
Than nourysche yaupyng pouttis to feidde

The greiddye gleddis and gainlye foulis”

“ ’Tis not for breidde “’tis not for feidde”
Sayit the fayre maye “that I goe forthe
’Tis all for lofe! ’Tis all for lofe
Bot that this worlde is lyttel worthe

For myne trewe lofe bathe taene the glennis
And if he is als I dmedde sone
Als greate ane deuil amang mome-hennis
Als wemyng I’ll se him no more

So I moste chainge this momtyl fraime
But not the soul withynne that dwelhis
For that will gif mee joye and aime
Als shymmyng o’er the firthis and fellis”

The wyffe takis hir farre benne the caife
The lairde bee chuckilis jumpis and flyngis
And tryit the poweris of his two armis
Wauffyng them als theye had beine wyngis

For bee wals more non half resolvit
To haif ane chainge and wyng the ayne
And touzel with these lofelye thyngis
Among the punpil blossomis rayne

And aye he wafit his ammis aboute
How theye wolde doo for wyngis to trye
And aye he gaif ane loudde gaffaw
Thynkand the maydenis to outflye

Then out caime bonnye Barberry Blaike
Ane spreckhit larke so swete to se
“Gode bye sir lairde” sho memrylye cryit
“Now come and mounte the heuinis withe mee”

The lairde he manne to the knowe heidde
To se quhare that swete bunde wolde fle
“Och chainge mee chainge me” quod the lairde
“Or I for downrychte lofe moste dee”

The wyffe toke him far benne the caife
And sore he nainit with tormente slowe
But alle that sho colde maike of him
Wals ane unseimlye hoodye crowe

Then that gruesome burde wals sore in raige
And cursit the wyffe bothe but and benne
For he wolde bee ane cocke lavemocke
To followe that bewytching henne

Then the wyffe sho toke the lairdis gode gunne
And helde it at him glacheyyng there
Lorde howe he skraichit and fledde for lyffe
For that wals more than crowe colde beare

Then the lairde he toke his lonelye flychte
Lamentyng sore his aspecke grimme
For neither laverocke rooke nor crowe
Nor swete morehenne wolde melle with hymme

At his approach the hoodyis fledde
The mooke but an the corbye crowd
The faulkon and the greiddye gledde
Flewe half dementyd to and fro

The lordlye egill left the clyffe
His herte gat neuir soche ane stounne
And yellit his terrour yont the lyfte
For the blacke lairde of Gilbertoun

But hadde you seen the blewe henrounne
Als sho sattu caiperyng bee the streimme
You wolde haif lauchyt quhille you falhit down
To haif seine him loke and hearit him sreimme

Sho knottyt hir throppyl lyke ane purse
And spredde his yellow trammis behynde
And reardyng screwit the fynmamente
To the tap storyis of the wynde

I haif beine eiste I haif beine weste
And o'er the border mountainis blewe
But I neuir sawe als dafte lyke beiste
Als ane o'enfrychtenit herrounsheugh

But och that lofely spreckhit larke
Wals teisit and perseceited so
That nychte and daye hee followit hir
This vylde voluptuous hoodye crowe

And the sweite monehennis they jynkit and jeeryd
And wolde not lette him once come neare
Quhille sore hee cursit and he sweirit
And callit them naimis ane shaime til heare

Now this crowe he pruvit ane lonelye bunde
For hee hald no converse with his kynde
The morehennis lauchit him sore to scorne
And theyre lofenis dabbit him neirlye blynde

But the morehennis tirit of the moris
And one bee one came hame theyre wayis
But they all had fedderis on theyre feitte
And lymbis until theyne dying dayis

But the lairde remaynit though many a daye
At the grande wytchis dome hee prayit
Sho only shuit the burde awaye
And with the gunne his herte dismayit

“Bee gone” sho cryit “and taik the bente
Tis incite ane crowe that you remayne
For euil wals your hemtis intende
And blacke myschefe youne whole desygne

And you shall rofe ane haitfulle bunde
And feidde on garbage ear’ and laite
Until the larke of youn deirre lofe
Shalle syng you unto mannis estaite”

Then the pore crowis herte wals lyke to breake
And the teris ranne owem his colle blacke chynne
And aye he cursit his amorit herte
That ledde him on to deidlye synne

“O womanis lofe O womanis lofe
Quhat greifis on manne it hathe brochte downe
But neuin wals blaide so harde bestaide
Als the pore lairde of Gilbertoun

Now I to feidde myne lordlye gobe
Moste daylye baigel through the wynde
To picke the eyne of pone deade lambis
Or houke the haslet of the hynde

Or maybes of ane burstyn frogge

To maike myne supper on the heathe
But the flesche or bonis of ane morecok
I'll neur picke whyle I haif breathe

Now I haif loste myne forestis darke
Myne hillis myne herdis and feildis of come,
And I haif loste myne lofely larke
The bonnyeste burde that euir wals borne

But I will seike hir in the skye
And ower the felle and by the se
And I will cower benethe hir eye
And begge that sho wille pity mee"

Och quha colde haif thought that woeful burde
Als whaiskyng over cnaig and lynne
Coulde haif hadde resounne at his herte
But an ane hoomyn soule withynne

But theme are thyngis of spelle and power
That neur wals knowne and neur wille bee
Saife to the Wyffe of Ezdel-more
The lairde of Gilbertoun and mee

FYTTE THE FOURTHE

There wals ane crow satte on ane stone
Abone the yette of Gilbertoun
But it flewe awaye and there wals none
Sure soche ane burde had neuin flowne

For that crow it spoke the wordis of menne
It spoke the wordis that wemyng knewe
It sung ane sang of a morelande glenne
Ane song that neuin colde bee trewe

And menne and wemyng fledd for frychte
And crappe in holis and boris amayne
And messanis yowlit and lordlye grewis
Glymit in amaize for lacke of brayne

And the horses snorkit at the stalle
And the gaineris yellit ane pyteous waylle
But the loste lairdis braif poynter Colle
Crepit to the yette and waggit his taylle

But the aulde laidye of Gilbertoun
Came loutyng twayfolde owen a rung
“Quhat burde is this” the laidye sayit
“That syngis to mee with hoomyn tongue”

“Och I am ane somryful synnful burde
The curse of heuin is on myne heidde
For I bee guiltye thochtis wals lurit
Myne Makeris image to degrade

Yit stille I lofe the hoomyn raice
And I canne sorrowe for theyre synne
And I haif hopis of heuinis graice
And ane immmortyl soule withynne

O modem deirre or I wals borne
I haif hearit you telle with feire and woe
You dremyt you wals in chyldebedde layit
And bure ane haitful hoody crowe

And so you did I am youre sonne
Foredomyt to bee this cnetune lowe
I wyshit to bee ane tuneful larke
But tunnit ane pyteous hoodye crowe

Quhat shalle I saye quhat shalle I doo
A moderis prayens inaye moche availle
A moderis lofe maye yet subdue
This synful spelle which I bewaille

Ane lofelye burde that farre hathe flowne
And you moste fynde hir if you canne
Sho has the power and sho alone
To tunn me til ane mortyl manne”

The laidy raisit him hackerit faice
Hir senses all benumbit and gone
“Quhat sayis the beiste for be goddis graice
Myne herte is turnit intil ane stone

This is some horryd thyng bewytchit
Get all your gunnis and shotte it deidde
I wille gif that manne ane hundred merkis
Quha bnyngis to mee its illfaurd heidde”

Then the crowe hee thochte it tyme to flytte

For gun shottis were his mortyl dreidde
But the gmeate bigge teris ranne downe his chekis
Als rounde and cleire als draps of leidde

But wordis gone eiste and wordis gone weste
That these darke deiddis of glaumourye
By the dredful wyffe of Ezdel-more
Walde rewine all the southe countrye

Then prieste and peasaunte kyssit the roode
And sayit theyre *aves* o'er and o'er
For all the lande wals in feirre and dredde
For the pouerful wyffe of Ezdel-more

But it happenit on ane lofelye momne
Quhan Maye had all hir blossomis sette
That there rayse ane laverocke from the corne
And mounted to the mornynge yette

And no one kennit quence sho had flowne
Quhille theye hearit its meltyng straynis abofe
And it saylit on the cloudis of eyder downe
And it sang of heuinlye lofe

That bonnye burdis sang it wals so sweitte
Als it melted from the skye
That the owssen lowit outower theyre meitte
Charmit with the melodye

And the horses knelit withynne the stalle
All quiveryng with delychte
The gainsoine lambis forgotte theyre playe
And lokit to heuinis heychte

And all the burdis in the grene foreste
Came postyng through the ayre
It wals lyke ane brydal of boundlesse lofe
For the layis of heuin were there

The bleyter came bompyng from the mosse
The stynte and the graye curlewe
And the plevir caime in his corslet blacke
But he durste notte gif ane whewe

And the peaseweippe cockit him creste of blewe
Als highe als it wolde reirre

And the myresnyppe came in his rokelaye newe
To se quhat wals asteire

And the merlyn hang in the myddel ayre
With his lyttill wyngis outspreadde
Als if let downe from the heuinis there
By ane viewlesse sylken threadde

And Sandy the pyper lefte the brooke
And the ouzel his glittye stone
And robyn lefte the grenewode nooke
Though the boshe wals all his owne

From banke and brae and grenewode bushe
All rounde fayre Gilbertoun
That morne there wals neither hish nor whush
But the laiverockis sang alone

Och I wolde haif giuen quhat wolde I notte
To haif hearit that heuinlye laye
For the strayne from seconde hand ygotte
Is berefit of its magick swaye

But aye the burdyn of the sang
If the trothe to me wals giuen
Wals of swete repentance on the yirth
And foregivenessse from the heuin

But I maye not syng I dare not syng
That strayne of heuinlye graice
For in ane auld wyffls taille lyke myne
It wolde sore bee out of plaice

But amangis the burdis ane hoody crowe
Satte hyche on the auld rown tine
Quha hang his heidde in doleful wyse
And ane mounnfulle burde wals hee

And aye hee turnit up his waterye eyne
With hevye syche and grone
Als if the sang were maide for him
And were maide fon him alone

And the tens ranne downe his duffye chekis
Aye als the bonny burde sung
And he shoke his dobye heidde and prayit

Some wordis in hoomyn tongue

But thresher John he hearit these wordis
And ane mychte blythe manne wals bee
For hee countyd on the hundred merkis
That were offerit bee his ladye

And hee has gone up to the ende wyndowe
That lokyt to the auld rown tre
And hee bathe let flie at the pore hoodye crowe
Quhille downe to the grounde felle hee

“Faythe taikie thou that!” quod thresher John
“Thou cretume of warlockrye
Thyne heidde is womthe an hundred merkis
To myne auld wyffe and mee”

But quhan that crowe felle from the tre
He gaif soche ane feirful crye
That rang from the grenewode to the clouded
And bobbyt agaynste the skye

And the lyttill wee seraph lefte the clouded
On the eebrow of the daye
And ane strayne of loudde lamente wals hearit
Farre through the heuinis awaye

And all the burdis of the gode gnene wode
Of the more but an the daille
Theye followit awaye bee the selfsaime rode
With ane deippe and pyteous waille

But thresher John caime downe the stayre
Chauntyng this merrie song
“Myne laidye maye nowe drawe out hir purse
For I’ll maike its necke fulle long

And its hey for my gunne and my goode auld gunne
Sho’s the quene of the deeddlye playe
For and hundred merkis bee ane aulde bamne-manne
Is not wonne everilke daye”

So Johnis awaye rounde to the auld rown tre
His gallante preye to bryng
But the hoodye raysit two eyes to him
Lyke ane wanyirthlye thyng

It wals ane loke John colde not thole
And his preye hee darit notte taikie
For it shoke him to the very soule
And maide all his herte to quaike

“Goddis curse on you” quod the hoodye crowe
“Do you know quhat you haif donne
You haif slayne ane soule and bodye bothe
And youre sande of lyffe is ronne”

John ranne for lyffe he knowit not quhidder
Through terrour and through payne
And hee neuir loote one scraughe byde anidder
Quhille he felle on his owne herthe stayne

And hee hath tauld soche ane strainge mixit taille
Of myrth and of mysterye
That all the menzie and theyre ould daime
Ranne out this crowe to se

But quhan theye caime to the rown tre greinne
With crosyer and with rode
There laye the lairde of Gilbertoun
A welteryng in his blode

“Och quha has donne this rothelesse deidde
Myne deirre sonne telle to mee”
“It wals thresher John” the lairde replyit
And streikit him downe to dee

And hee neuir spoke ane oder worde
But three tymis kyssit the rode
And turnit ane sorrowful ee til heuin
Which wolde bee understode

And theye buryit him in the rown tre grene
Beneathe the auld rown tre
For theye durste notte taikie him to Maryis kyrke
That martyr to wytcherye

So this is playne let wemyng or menne
Thnough lyffe bee quhat theye maye
Deathe bryngis them to themsellis agayne
To euil or gode for aye

Maye this bee ane wairnyng to all yong menne
That sporte in the morelande fellis
To bee ware of the sleike and bonnye more-henne
That lunkis in the hadder bellis

And O to bee ware of the swete swete burde
Quhais notis gar the herte stryngis playe
And most of all quhan hir voyce is hearit
Bee hir laine in the gloamyng graye

But quhat bathe become of pore thnesher John
O no thyng of moche availle
For theye hangit him on the auld rown tre
Which endeth myne grefous taille