Classic Poetry Series

Anonymous English

- poems -

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Allalu Mo Wauleen (The Beggar's Address to His Bag)

GOOD neighbors, dear, be cautious,
And covet no man's pounds or pence.
Ambition's greedy maw shun,
And tread the path of innocence!
Dread crooked ways and cheating,
And be not like those hounds of Hell,
Like prowling wolves awaiting,
Which once upon my footsteps fell.

An allalu mo wauleen,
My little bag I treasured it;
'Twas stuffed from string to sauleen,
A thousand times I measured it!

Should you ever reach Dungarvan,
That wretched hole of dole and sin,
Be on your sharpest guard, man,
Or the eyes out of your head they'll pin.
Since I left sweet Tipperary,
They eased me of my cherished load,
And left me light and airy,
A poor dark man upon the road!

An allalu mo wauleen!
No hole, no stitch, no rent in it,
'Twas stuffed from string to sauleen,
My half-year's rent was pent in it.

A gay gold ring unbroken,
A token to a fair young maid,
Which told of love unspoken,
To one whose hopes were long delayed,
A pair of woolen hoseen,
Close knitted, without rub or seam,
And a pound of weed well-chosen,
Such as smokers taste in dream!

An allalu mo wauleen,
Such a store I had in it;
'Twas stuffed from string to sauleen,
And nothing mean or bad in it!

Full oft in cosy corner
We'd sit beside a winter fire,
Nor envied prince or lord, or
To kingly rank did we aspire.
But twice they overhauled us,
The dark police of aspect dire,
Because they feared, Mo Chairdeas,
You held the dreaded Fenian fire!

An allalu mo wauleen,

My bag and me they sundered us,
'Twas stuffed from string to sauleen,
My bag of bags they sundered us!

Yourself and I, mo stóreen,
At every hour of night and day,
Through road and lane and bohreen
Without complaint we made our way,
Till one sore day a carman
In pity took us from the road,
And faced us towards Dungarvan
Where mortal sin hath firm abode.

An allalu mo wauleen,
Without a hole or rent in it,
'Twas stuffed from string to sauleen,
My half-year's rent was pent in it!

My curses attend Dungarvan,
Her boats, her borough, and her fish,
May every woe that mars man
Come dancing down upon her dish!
For all the rogues behind you,
From Slaney's bank to Shannon's tide,
Are but poor scholars, mind you,
To the rogues you'd meet in Abbeyside!

An allalu mo wauleen,
My little bag I treasured it,
'Twas stuffed from string to sauleen,
A thousand times I measured it!

Anonymous English

Amergin

I AM the wind which breathes upon the sea,
I am the wave of the ocean,
I am the murmur of the billows,
I am the ox of the seven combats,
I am the vulture upon the rocks,
I am a beam of the sun,
I am the fairest of plants,
I am a wild boar in valour,
I am a salmon in the water,
I am a lake in the plain,
I am a word of science,
I am the point of the lance in battle,
I am the God who creates in the head the fire.
Who is it who throws light into the meeting on the mountain?
Who announces the ages of the moon?
Who teaches the place where couches the sun?

Anonymous English

Any Soldier To His Son

What did I do, sonny, in the Great World War?
Well, I learned to peel potatoes and to scrub the barrack floor.
I learned to push a barrow and I learned to swing a pick,
I learned to turn my toes out, and to make my eyeballs click.
I learned the road to Folkestone, and I watched the English shore,
Go down behind the skyline, as I thought, for evermore.
And the Blighty boats went by us and the harbour hove in sight,
And they landed us and sorted us and marched us "by the right".
"Quick march!" across the cobbles, by the kids who rang along
Singing "Appoo?" "Spearmant" "Shokolah?" through dingy old Boulogne;
By the widows and the nurses and the niggers and Chinese,
And the gangs of smiling Fritzes, as saucy as you please.

I learned to ride as soldiers ride from Etaps to the Line,
For days and nights in cattle trucks, packed in like droves of swine.
I learned to curl and kip it on a foot of muddy floor,
And to envy cows and horses that have beds of beaucoup straw.
I learned to wash in shell holes and to shave myself in tea,
While the fragments of a mirror did a balance on my knee.
I learned to dodge the whizz-bangs and the flying lumps of lead,
And to keep a foot of earth between the sniper and my head.
I learned to keep my haversack well filled with buckshee food,
To take the Army issue and to pinch what else I could.
I learned to cook Maconochie with candle-ends and string,
With "four-by-two" and sardine-oil and any God-dam thing.
I learned to use my bayonet according as you please
For a breadknife or a chopper or a prong for toasting cheese.
I learned "a first field dressing" to serve my mate and me
As a dish-rag and a face-rag and a strainer for our tea.
I learned to gather souvenirs that home I hoped to send,
And hump them round for months and months and dump them in the end.
I learned to hunt for vermin in the lining of my shirt,
To crack them with my finger-nail and feel the beggars spirt;
I learned to catch and crack them by the dozen and the score
And to hunt my shirt tomorrow and to find as many more.

I learned to sleep by snatches on the firestep of a trench,
And to eat my breakfast mixed with mud and Fritz's heavy stench.
I learned to pray for Blighty ones and lie and squirm with fear,
When Jerry started strafing and the Blighty ones were near.
I learned to write home cheerful with my heart a lump of lead
With the thought of you and mother, when she heard that I was dead.
And the only thing like pleasure over there I ever knew,
Was to hear my pal come shouting, "There's a parcel, mate, for you."

So much for what I did do - now for what I have not done:
Well, I never kissed a French girl and I never killed a Hun,
I never missed an issue of tobacco, pay, or rum,
I never made a friend and yet I never lacked a chum.
I never borrowed money, and I never lent - but once
(I can learn some sorts of lessons though I may be borne a dunce).
I never used to grumble after breakfast in the Line

That the eggs were cooked too lightly or the bacon cut too fine.
I never told a sergeant just exactly what I thought,
I never did a pack-drill, for I never quite got caught.
I never punched a Red-Cap's nose (be prudent like your Dad),
But I'd like as many sovereigns as the times I've wished I had.
I never stopped a whizz-bang, though I've stopped a lot of mud,
But the one that Fritz sent over with my name on was a dud.
I never played the hero or walked about on top,
I kept inside my funk hole when the shells began to drop.
Well, Tommy Jones's father must be made of different stuff:
I never asked for trouble - the issue was enough.

So I learned to live and lump it in the lovely land of war,
Where the face of nature seems a monstrous septic sore,
Where the bowels of earth of earth hang open, like the guts of something slain,
And the rot and wreck of everything are churned and churned again;
Where all is done in darkness and where all is still in day,
Where living men are buried and the dead unburied lay;
Where men inhabit holes like rats, and only rats live there;
Where cottage stood and castle once in days before La Guerre;
Where endless files of soldiers thread the everlasting way,
By endless miles of duckboards, through endless walls of clay;
Where life is one hard labour, and a soldiers gets his rest
When they leave him in the daisies with a puncture in his chest;
Where still the lark in summer pours her warble from the skies,
And underneath, unheeding, lie the blank upstaring eyes.

And I read the Blighty papers, where the warriors of the pen
Tell of "Christmas in the trenches" and "The Spirit of our men";
And I saved the choicest morsels and I read them to my chum,
And he muttered, as he cracked a louse and wiped it off his thumb:
"May a thousand chats from Belgium crawl under their fingers as they write;
May they dream they're not exempted till they faint with mortal fright;
May the fattest rats in Dickebusch race over them in bed;
May the lies they've written choke them like a gas cloud till they're dead;
May the horror and the torture and the things they never tell
(For they only write to order) be reserved for them in Hell!"

You'd like to be a soldier and go to France some day?
By all the dead in Delville Wood, by all the nights I lay
Between our lines and Fritz's before they brought me in;
By this old wood-and-leather stump, that once was flesh and skin;
By all the lads who crossed with me but never crossed again,
By all the prayers their mothers and their sweethearts prayed in vain,
Before the things that were that day should ever more befall
May God in common pity destroy us one and all!

Anonymous English

Bah, Bah, Black Sheep

Bah, bah, black sheep,
  Have you any wool?
Yes, marry have I,
  Three bags full;
One for my master,
  One for my dame,
But none for the little boy
Who cries in the lane.

Anonymous English

Boys and Girls Come out to Play

Boys and girls come out to play,
The moon does shine as bright as day;
Come with a hoop, and come with a call,
Come with a good will or not at all.
Loose your supper, and loose your sleep,
Come to your playfellows in the street;
Up the ladder and down the wall.
A halfpenny loaf will serve us all.
But when the loaf is gone, what will you do?
Those who would eat must work -- 'tis true.

Anonymous English

Caesar's Song

Bow, wow, wow,
Whose dog art thou?
Little Tom Tinker's dog,
Bow, wow, wow.

Anonymous English

Dickery Dickery Dock

Dickery, dickery dock,
The mouse ran up the clock;
The clock struck one,
The mouse ran down,
Dickery, dickery dock.

Anonymous English

Ding Dong Bell

Ding dong bell,
The cat is in the well.
Who put her in?
Little Johnny Green.
What a naughty boy was that,
To drown poor Pussy cat.
Who never did any harm,
And kill'd the mice in his father's barn.

Anonymous English

High Diddle Diddle

High diddle, diddle,
The cat and the fiddle,
The cow jump'd over the moon;
The little dog laugh'd
To see such craft,
And the dish ran away with the spoon.

Anonymous English

Hush a By Baby

Hush-a-by Baby
On the tree top,
When the wind blows
The cradle will rock;
When the bough breaks
The cradle will fall,
Down tumbles baby,
Cradle, and all.

Anonymous English

I Know My Love

I KNOW my Love by his way of walking,
And I know my love by his way of talking,
And I know my love dressed in a suit of blue,
And if my Love leaves me, what will I do?
 And still she cried, "I love him the best,
 And a troubled mind, sure, can know no rest,"
 And still she cried, "Bonny boys are few,
 And if my Love leaves me, what will I do?"

There is a dance house in Mar'dyke,
And there my true love goes every night;
He takes a strange one upon his knee,
And don't you think, now, that vexes me?
 And still she cried, "I love him the best,
 And a troubled mind, sure, can know no rest,"
 And still she cried, "Bonny boys are few,
 And if my Love leaves me, what will I do?"

If my Love knew I could wash and wring,
If my Love knew I could weave and spin,
I would make a dress all of the finest kind,
But the want of money, sure, leaves me behind.

And still she cried, "I love him the best,
And a troubled mind, sure, can know no rest,"
And still she cried, "Bonny boys are few,
And if my Love leaves me, what will I do?"

I know my Love is an arrant rover,
I know he'll wander the wide world over,
In dear old Ireland he'll no longer tarry,
And an English one he is sure to marry.
And still she cried, "I love him the best,
And a troubled mind, sure, can know no rest,"
And still she cried, "Bonny boys are few,
And if my Love leaves me, what will I do?"

Anonymous English

Jack and Gill

Jack and Gill
Went up the hill,
To fetch a pail of water;
Jack fell down
And broke his crown,
And Gill came tumbling after.

Anonymous English

Jack Sprat

Jack Sprat
Could eat no fat,
His wife could eat no lean;
And so betwixt them both,
They lick'd the platter clean.

Anonymous English

Johnny, I Hardly Knew Ye

WHILE going the road to sweet Athy,
  Hurroo! hurroo!
While going the road to sweet Athy,
  Hurroo! hurroo!
While going the road to sweet Athy,
A stick in my hand and a drop in my eye,
A doleful damsel I heard cry:
 "Och, Johnny, I hardly knew ye!

"With drums and guns, and guns and drums,
The enemy nearly slew ye;
My darling dear, you look so queer,
 Och, Johnny, I hardly knew ye!

"Where are your eyes that looked so mild?
    Hurroo! hurroo!
Where are your eyes that looked so mild?
    Hurroo! hurroo!
Where are your eyes that looked so mild,
When my poor heart you first beguiled?
Why did you run from me and the child?
 Och, Johnny, I hardly knew ye!
  With drums, etc.

"Where are the legs with which you run?
    Hurroo! hurroo!
Where are thy legs with which you run?
    Hurroo! hurroo!
Where are the legs with which you run
When first you went to carry a gun?
Indeed, your dancing days are done!
 Och, Johnny, I hardly knew ye!
  With drums, etc.

It grieved my heart to see you sail,
    Hurroo! hurroo!
It grieved my heart to see you sail,
    Hurroo! hurroo!
It grieved my heart to see you sail,
Though from my heart you took leg-bail;
Like a cod you're doubled up head and tail,
 Och, Johnny, I hardly knew ye!
  With drums, etc.

"You haven't an arm and you haven't a leg,
    Hurroo! hurroo!
You haven't an arm and you haven't a leg,
    Hurroo! hurroo!
You haven't an arm and you haven't a leg,
You're an eyeless, noseless, chickenless egg;
You'll have to be put with a bowl to beg:
 Och, Johnny, I hardly knew ye!

With drums, etc.

"I'm happy for to see you home,
Hurroo! hurroo!
I'm happy for to see you home,
Hurroo! hurroo!
I'm happy for to see you home,
All from the Island of Sulloon;
So low in flesh, so high in bone;
Och, Johnny, I hardly knew ye!
With drums, etc.

"But sad it is to see you so,
Hurroo! hurroo!
But sad it is to see you so,
Hurroo! hurroo!
But sad it is to see you so,
And to think of you now as an object of woe,
Your Peggy'll still keep you on as her beau;
Och, Johnny, I hardly knew ye!

With drums and guns, and guns and drums,
The enemy nearly slew ye;
My darling dear, you look so queer,
Och, Johnny, I hardly knew ye.

Anonymous English

Little Jack Horner

Little Jack Horner
Sat in a corner,
Eating of Christmas pye;
He put in his thumb,
And pull'd out a plumb,
And what a good boy was I.

Anonymous English

Nell Flaherty's Drake

MY NAME it is Nell, right candid I tell,
 And I live near a dell I ne'er will deny,
I had a large drake, the truth for to spake,
 My grandfather left me when going to die;
He was merry and sound, and would weigh twenty pound,
 The universe round would I rove for his sake.
Bad luck to the robber, be he drunken or sober,
 That murdered Nell Flaherty's beautiful drake.

His neck it was green, and rare to be seen,
 He was fit for a queen of the highest degree.
His body so white, it would you delight,
 He was fat, plump, and heavy, and brisk as a bee.
This dear little fellow, his legs they were yellow,
 He could fly like a swallow, or swim like a hake,
But some wicked habbage, to grease his white cabbage,
 Has murdered Nell Flaherty's beautiful drake!

May his pig never grunt, may his cat never hunt,
 That a ghost may him haunt in the dark of the night.
May his hens never lay, may his horse never neigh,
 May his goat fly away like an old paper kite;
May his duck never quack, may his goose be turned black
 And pull down his stack with her long yellow beak.
May the scurvy and itch never part from the britch
 Of the wretch that murdered Nell Flaherty's drake!

May his rooster ne'er crow, may his bellows not blow,
 Nor potatoes to grow—may he never have none—
May his cradle not rock, may his chest have no lock,
 May his wife have no frock for to shade her backbone.
That the bugs and the fleas may this wicked wretch tease,
 And a piercing north breeze make him tremble and shake.
May a four-years'-old bug build a nest in the lug
 Of the monster that murdered Nell Flaherty's drake.

May his pipe never smoke, may his tea-pot be broke,
 And to add to the joke may his kettle not boil;
May he be poorly fed till the hour he is dead.
 May he always be fed on lobscouse and fish oil.
May he swell with the gout till his grinders fall out,
 May he roar, howl, and shout with a horrid toothache,
May his temple wear horns and his toes carry corns,
 The wretch that murdered Nell Flaherty's drake.

May his dog yelp and howl with both hunger and cold,
 May his wife always scold till his brains go astray.
May the curse of each hag, that ever carried a bag,
 Light down on the wag till his head it turns gray.
May monkeys still bite him, and mad dogs affright him,
 And every one slight him, asleep or awake.
May wasps ever gnaw him, and jackdaws ever claw him,

The monster that murdered Nell Flaherty's drake.

But the only good news I have to diffuse,
Is of Peter Hughes and Paddy McCade,
And crooked Ned Manson, and big-nosed Bob Hanson,
Each one had a grandson of my beautiful drake.
Oh! my bird he has dozens of nephews and cousins,
And one I must have, or my heart it will break.
To keep my mind easy, or else I'll run crazy,
And so ends the song of my beautiful drake.

Anonymous English

The Maid of the Sweet Brown Knowe

COME all ye lads and lassies and listen to me a while,
And I'll sing for you a verse or two will cause you all to smile;
It's all about a young man, and I'm going to tell you now,
How he lately came a-courting of the Maid of the Sweet Brown Knowe.

Said he, "My pretty fair maid, will you come along with me,
We'll both go off together, and married we will be;
We'll join our hands in wedlock bands, I'm speaking to you now,
And I'll do my best endeavour for the Maid of the Sweet Brown Knowe."

This fair and fickle young thing, she knew not what to say,
Her eyes did shine like silver bright and merrily did play;
She said, "Young man, your love subdue, for I am not ready now,
And I'll spend another season at the foot of the Sweet Brown Knowe.

Said he, "My pretty fair maid, how can you say so,
Look down in yonder valley where my crops do gently grow,
Look down in yonder valley where my horses and my plough
Are at their daily labour for the Maid of the Sweet Brown Knowe."

"If they're at their daily labour, kind sir, it's not for me,
For I've heard of your behaviour, I have, indeed," she said;
"There is an Inn where you call in, I have heard the people say,
Where you rap and call and pay for all, and go home at the break of day."

"If I rap and call and pay for all, the money is all my own,
And I'll never spend your fortune, for I hear you have got none.
You thought you had my poor heart broke in talking with me now,
But I'll leave you where I found you, at the foot of the Sweet Brown Knowe."

Anonymous English

The Moral

You mustn't groom an Arab with a file.
 You hadn't ought to tension-spring a mule.
You couldn't push a brumby fifty mile
 And drop him in a boiler-shed to cool.
I'll sling you through six counties in a day.
 I'll hike you up a grade of one in ten.
I am Duty, Law and Order under way,
 I'm the Mentor of banana-fingered men!
I will make you I know your left hand from your right.
 I will teach you not to drink about your biz.
I'm the only temperance advocate in sight!
 I am all the Education Act there is!

Anonymous English

There was an Old Woman

There was an old woman
Liv'd under a hill,
And if she isn't gone
She lives there still.

Anonymous English

This Pig Went to Market

This pig went to market,
That pig staid at home;
This pig had roast meat,
That pig had none;
This pig went to the barn-door,
And cry'd week, week, for more.

Anonymous English

Three Wise Men of Gotham

Three wise men of Gotham,
They went to sea in a bowl,
And if the bowl had been stronger,
My song had been longer.

Anonymous English