

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **Bjornstjerne Bjornson**

**- poems -**

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## A Day Of Sunshine

It was such a lovely sunshine-day,  
The house and the yard couldn't hold me;  
I roved to the woods, on my back I lay,  
In cradle of fancy rolled me;  
But there were ants, and gnats that bite,  
The horse-fly was keen, the wasp showed fight.

"Dear me, don't you want to be out in this fine  
weather?" --said mother, who sat on the steps and sang.

It was such a lovely sunshine-day,  
The house and the yard couldn't hold me;  
A meadow I found, on my back I lay,  
And sang what my spirit told me;  
Then snakes came crawling, a fathom long,  
To bask in the sun,--I fled with my song.

"In such blessed weather we can go barefoot,"--said mother,  
as she pulled off her stockings.

It was such a lovely sunshine-day,  
The house and the yard couldn't hold me;  
I loosened a boat, on my back I lay,  
While blithely the current bowled me;  
But hot grew the sun, and peeled my nose;  
Enough was enough, and to land I chose.

"Now these are just the days to make hay in,"-- said mother,  
as she stuck the rake in it.

It was such a lovely sunshine-day,  
The house and the yard couldn't hold me;  
I climbed up a tree, oh, what bliss to play,  
As cooling the breeze consoled me;  
But worms soon fell on my neck, by chance,  
And jumping, I cried: "'T is the Devil's own dance!"

"Yes, if the cows aren't sleek and shiny to-day, they'll  
never be so,"--said mother, gazing up the hillside.

It was such a lovely sunshine-day,  
The house and the yard couldn't hold me;  
I dashed to the waterfall's endless play,  
There only could peace enfold me.  
The shining sun saw me drown and die,--  
If you made this ditty, 't was surely not I.

"Three more such sunshine-days, and everything will  
be in,"--said mother, and went to make my bed.

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## **Alone And Repentant**

A friend I possess, whose whispers just said,  
"God's peace!" to my night-watching mind.  
When daylight is gone and darkness brings dread,  
He ever the way can find.

He utters no word to smite and to score;  
He, too, has known sin and its grief.  
He heals with his look the place that is sore,  
And stays till I have relief.

He takes for his own the deed that is such  
That sorrows of heart increase.  
He cleanses the wound with so gentle a touch,  
The pain must give way to peace.

He followed each hope the heights that would scale  
Reproached not a hapless descent.  
He stands here just now, so mild, but so pale; --  
In time he shall know what it meant.

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## **Ballad Of Tailor Nils**

If you were born before yesterday,  
Surely you've heard about Tailor Nils, who flaunts him so gay.

If it's more than a week that you've been here,  
Surely you've heard how Knut Storedragen got a lesson severe.

Up on the barn of Ola-Per Kviste after a punchin':  
"When Nils heaves you again, take with you some luncheon."

Hans Bugge, he was a man so renowned,  
Haunting ghosts of his name spread alarm all around.

"Tailor Nils, where you wish to lie, now declare!  
On that spot will I spit and lay your head right there."--

"Oh, just come up so near, that I know you by the scent!  
Think not that by your jaw to earth I shall be bent!"

When first they met, 't was scarce a bout at all,  
Neither man was ready yet to try to get a fall.

The second time Hans Bugge slipped his hold.  
"Are you tired now, Hans Bugge? The dance will soon be bold."

The third time Hans fell headlong, and forth the blood did spurt.  
"Why spit you now so much, man?" -- "Oh my, that fall did hurt!"--

Saw you a tree casting shadows on new-fallen snow?  
Saw you Nils on a maiden smiling glances bestow?

Have you seen Tailor Nils when the dance he commences?  
Are you a maiden, then go!--It's too late, when you've lost your senses.

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## Evening

Evening sun in beauty is shining,  
Lazy puss on the step's reclining.

"Two small mice,  
Cream that was so nice,  
Four fine bits of fish,  
Stolen from a dish,  
And I'm so good and full,  
And I'm so lazy and dull!"  
Says the pussy.

Mother-hen her wings now is sinking,  
Rooster stands on one leg a-thinking:

"That gray goose,  
High he flies and loose;  
But just watch, you must admit,  
Naught he has of rooster-wit.  
Chickens in! To the coop away!  
Gladly dismiss we the sun for today!"  
Says the rooster.

"Dear me, it is good to be living,  
When life no labor is giving!"  
Says the song-bird.

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## Ingerid Sletten

Ingerid Sletten of Sillejord  
Neither gold nor silver did own,  
But a little hood of gay wool alone,  
Her mother had given of yore.

A little hood of gay wool alone,  
With no braid nor lining, was here;  
But parent love made it ever dear,  
And brighter than gold it shone.

She kept the hood twenty years just so:  
"Be it spotless," softly she cried,  
"Until I shall wear it once as bride,  
When I to the altar go."

She kept the hood thirty years just so:  
"Be it spotless," softly she cried,  
"Then wear it I will, a gladsome bride,  
When it to our Lord I show."

She kept the hood forty years just so,  
With her mother ever in mind.  
"Little hood, be with me to this resigned,  
That ne'er to the altar we'll go."

She steps to the chest where the hood has lain,  
And seeks it with swelling heart;  
She guides her hand to its place apart,--  
But never a thread did remain.

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## **Johan Ludvig Heiberg 1860**

To the grave they bore him sleeping,  
Him the aged, genial gardener;  
Now the children gifts are heaping  
From the flower-bed he made.

There the tree that he sat under,  
And the garden gate is open,  
While we cast a glance and wonder  
Whether some one sits there still.

He is gone. A woman only  
Wanders there with languid footsteps,  
Clothed in black and now so lonely,  
Where his laughter erst rang clear.

As a child when past it going,  
Through the fence she looked with longing,  
Now great tears so freely flowing  
Are her thanks that she came in.

Fairy-tales and thoughts high-soaring  
Whispered to him 'neath the foliage.  
She flits softly, gathering, storing  
Them as solace for her woe.

\*

Far his wanderings once bore him,  
Bore this aged, genial searcher;  
One who listening sat before him  
Much could learn from time to time.

Life and letters were his ladder  
Up toward that which few discover,  
Thought's wide realm, with vision gladder  
He explored, each summit scaled.

In his manhood he defended  
All that greatness has and beauty;  
Later he the stars attended  
In their silent course to God.

\*

Older men remember rather  
"New Year!" ringing o'er the Northland.  
How it power had to gather  
Leaders to a greater age

Do you him remember leaping  
Forth, his horn so gladly winding,  
Back the mob on all sides sweeping

From the progress of the great?

Play of thought 'mid tears and laughter,  
Fauns and children were about him;  
Freedom's beacons high thereafter  
Kindled slowly of themselves.

And his words soon found a hearing,  
Peace of heart flowed from his music;  
All the land thrilled to the nearing  
Of a great prophetic choir.

\*\*

In his manhood he defended  
All that greatness has and beauty;  
Later he the stars attended  
In their silent course to God.

Northern flowers were his pleasure,  
As an aged genial gardener,  
From his nation's springtime treasure  
Culling seed for deathless growth.

Now with humor, now sedately,  
He kept planting or uprooting,  
While the Danish beech-tree stately  
Gave his soul its evening peace.

There the tree we saw him under,  
And the garden gate is open,  
While we cast a glance and wonder  
Whether some one sits there still.

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## **Lambkin Mine**

Kille, kille, lambkin mine,  
Though it often be hard to climb  
Over the rocks upswinging,  
Follow thy bell's sweet ringing!

Kille, kille, lambkin mine,  
Take good care of that fleece-coat thine!  
Sewed to one and another,  
Warm it shall keep my mother.

Kille, kille, lambkin mine,  
Feed and fatten thy flesh so fine!  
Know, you dear little sinner,  
Mother will have it for dinner!

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## Love Song

Have you love for me,  
Yours my love shall be,  
While the days of life are flowing.  
Short was summer's stay,  
Grass now pales away,  
With our play will come regrowing.

What you said last year  
Sounds yet in my ear,--  
Birdlike at the window sitting,  
Tapping, trilling there,  
Singing, in would bear  
Joy the warmth of sun befitting.

Litli-litli-lu,  
Do you hear me too,  
Youth behind the birch-trees biding?  
Now the words I send,  
Darkness will attend,  
May be you can give them guiding.

Take it not amiss!  
Sang I of a kiss?  
No, I surely never planned it.  
Did you hear it, you?  
Give no heed thereto,  
Haste I make to countermand it.

Oh, good-night, good-night  
Dreams enfold me bright  
Of your eyes' persuasive mildness.  
Many a silent word  
From their corners heard,--  
Breaking forth with gentle wildness.

Now my song is still;  
Is there more you will?  
All the tones, to me returning,  
Laughing, luring, soar;  
Did you wish me more?  
Still and warm the night is yearning.

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## **Love Thy Neighbor**

Love thy neighbor, to Christ be leal!  
Crush him never with iron-heel,  
Though in the dust he's lying!  
All the living responsive await  
Love with power to recreate,  
Needing alone the trying.

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## Marit's Song

"Dance!" called the fiddle,  
Its strings loudly giggled,  
The bailiff's man wriggled  
Ahead for a spree.

"Hold!" shouted Ola  
And tripped him to tumbling,  
The bailiff's man humbling,  
To maidens' great glee.

"Hop!" said then Erik,  
His foot struck the ceiling,  
The beams rang their pealing,  
The walls gave a shriek.

"Stop!" said now Elling,  
And seizing him collared,  
He held him and hollered:  
"You still are too weak!"

"Hei!" said then Rasmus,  
Fair Randi embracing:  
"Be quick now in placing  
The kiss that you know!"

"Nay!" answered Randi.  
A slapping she gave him,  
And from her she drave him:  
"Here take what I owe!"

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## Mountain Song

When you will the mountains roam  
And your pack are making,  
Put therein not much from home,  
Light shall be your taking!  
Drag no valley-fetters strong  
To those upland spaces,  
Toss them with a joyous song  
To the mountains' bases!

Birds sing Hail! from many a bough,  
Gone the fools' vain talking,  
Purer breezes fan your brow,  
You the heights are walking.  
Fill your breast and sing with joy!  
Childhood's mem'ries starting,  
Nod with blushing cheeks and coy,  
Bush and heather parting.  
If you stop and listen long,  
You will hear upwelling  
Solitude's unmeasured song  
To your ear full swelling;  
And when now there purls a brook,  
Now stones roll and tumble,  
Hear the duty you forsook  
In a world-wide rumble.

Fear, but pray, you anxious soul,  
While your mem'ries meet you!  
Thus go on; the perfect whole  
On the top shall greet you.  
Christ, Elijah, Moses, there  
Wait your high endeavor.  
Seeing them you'll know no care,  
Bless your path forever.

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## **Nils Finn**

Now little Nils Finn had away to go;  
The skis were too loose at both heel and toe.  
--"That's too bad!" rumbled yonder.

Then little Nils Finn in the snow set his feet:  
"You ugliest troll, you shall never me cheat!"  
--"Hee-ho-ha!" rumbled yonder.

Nils Finn with his staff beat the snow till it blew  
"Your trollship, now saw you how hapless it flew?"  
--"Hit-li-hu!" rumbled yonder.

Nils Finn pushed one ski farther forward with might;  
The other held fast,--he reeled left and right.  
--"Pull it up!" rumbled yonder.

Nils' tears wet the snow, while he kicked and he struck;  
The more that he kicked there, the deeper he stuck.  
--"That was good!" rumbled yonder.

The birch-trees, they danced, and the pine-trees said "Hoo!"  
They more were than one,--were a hundred and two.  
--"Know your way?" rumbled yonder.

A laugh shook the ridge till it made the snow fly;  
But Nils clenched his fists and he swore 't was a lie.  
--"Now beware!" rumbled yonder.

The snow-field yawned wide, and the heavens came low;  
Nils thought 't was now time for him also to go.  
--"Is he gone?" rumbled yonder.--

Two skis in the snow looked about everywhere,  
But saw nothing much; for there was nothing there.  
--"Where is Nils?" rumbled yonder.

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## **Our Country 1859**

A land there is, lying near far-northern snow,  
Where only the fissures life's springtime may know.  
But surging, the sea tells of great deeds done,  
And loved is the land as a mother by son.

What time we were little and sat on her knee,  
She gave us her saga with pictures to see.  
We read till our eyes opened wide and moist,  
While nodding and smiling she mute rejoiced.

We went to the fjord and in wonder beheld  
The ashen-gray bauta, that record of eld;  
Still older she stood and her silence kept,  
While stone-studded hows all around us slept.

Our hands she then took and away o'er the hill  
She led to the church ever lowly and still,  
Where humbly our forefathers knelt to pray,  
And mildly she taught us: "Do ye as they!"

She scattered her snow on the mountain's steep side,  
Then bade on swift skis her young manhood to glide;  
The North Sea she maddened with scourge of gales,  
Then bade her young manhood to hoist the sails.

Of beautiful maidens she gathered a throng,  
To follow our daring with smiles and with song,  
While she sat enthroned with her saga's scroll  
In mantle of moonlight beneath the Pole.

Then "Forward, go forward!" was borne on the wind,  
"With forefathers' aim and with forefathers' mind,  
For freedom, for Norsehood, for Norway, hurrah!"  
While echoing mountains voiced their hurrah.

Then life-giving fountains burst forth on our sight,  
Then we were baptized with her spirit of might,  
Then gleamed o'er the mountains a vision high,  
That summons us onward until we die.

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## Over The Lofty Mountains

Wonder I must, what I once may see  
Over the lofty mountains!  
Eyes shall meet only snow, may be;  
Standing here, each evergreen tree  
Over the heights is yearning;--  
Will it be long in learning?

Pinions strong bear the eagle away  
Over the lofty mountains  
Forth to the young and vigorous day;  
There he exults in the swift, wild play,  
Rests where his spirit orders,--  
Sees all the wide world's borders.

Full-leaved the apple-tree wishes naught  
Over the lofty mountains!  
Spreading, when summer hither is brought,  
Waiting till next time in its thought;  
Many a bird it is swinging,  
Knowing not what they are singing.

He who has longed for twenty years  
Over the lofty mountains,  
He who knows that he never nears,  
Smaller feels with the lapsing years,  
Heeds what the bird is singing  
Cheerily to its swinging.

Garrulous bird, what will you here  
Over the lofty mountains?  
Surely your nest was there less drear,  
Taller the trees, the outlook clear;--  
Will you then only bring me  
Longings, but naught to wing me?

Shall I then never, never go  
Over the lofty mountains?  
Shall to my thoughts this wall say,--No!  
Stand with terror of ice and snow,  
Barring the way unwended,  
Coffin me when life is ended?

Out will I! Out!--Oh, so far, far, far,  
Over the lofty mountains!  
Here is this cramping, confining bar,  
Baffling my thoughts, that so buoyant are;--  
Lord! Let me try the scaling,  
Suffer no final failing!

Sometime I know I shall rise and soar  
Over the lofty mountains.  
Hast Thou already ajar Thy door?--

Good is Thy home! Yet, Lord, I implore,  
Hold not the gates asunder,--  
Leave me my longing wonder!

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## Oyvind's Song

Lift thy head, thou undaunted youth!  
Though some hope may now break, forsooth,  
Brighter a new one and higher  
Shall throe eye fill with its fire.

Lift thy head to the vision clear!  
Something near thee is calling: "Here!"--  
Something with myriad voicing,  
Ever in courage rejoicing.

Lift thy head, for an azure height  
Rears within thee a vault of light;  
Music of harps there is ringing,  
Jubilant, rapturous singing.

Lift thy head and thy longing sing!  
None shall conquer the growing spring;  
Where there is life-making power,  
Time shall set free the flower.

Lift thy head and thyself baptize  
In the hopes that radiant rise,  
Heaven to earth foreshowing,  
And in each life-spark glowing!

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## Synnove's Song

Have thanks for all from our childhood's day,  
Our play together in woodland roaming.  
I thought that play would go on for aye,  
Though life should pass to its gloaming.

I thought that play would go on for aye,  
From bowers leading of leafy birches  
To where the Solbakke houses lay,  
And where the red-painted church is.

I sat and waited through evenings long  
And scanned the ridge with the spruces yonder;  
But darkening mountains made shadows throng,  
And you the way did not wander.

I sat and waited with scarce a doubt:  
He'll dare the way when the sun's descended.  
The light shone fainter, was nearly out,  
The day in darkness had ended.

My weary eye is so wont to gaze,  
To turn its look it is slow in learning;  
No other landmark it seeks, nor strays,  
Beneath the brow sorely burning.

They name a place where I help may find,  
And fain to Fagerli church would guide me;  
But try not thither to move my mind;  
He sits there ever beside me.

--But good it is, that full well I know,  
Who placed the houses both here and yonder,  
Then cut a way through the woods so low  
And let my eye on it wander.

But good it is that full well I know,  
Who built the church and to pray invited,  
And made them meeting in pairs to go  
Before the altar united.

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## **The Call**

Come calf now to mother,  
Come lamb that I choose,  
Come cats, one and t' other,  
With snowy-white shoes,  
Come gosling all yellow,  
Come forth with your fellow,  
Come chickens so small,  
Scarce walking at all,  
Come doves, that are mine now,  
With feathers so fine now!  
The grass is bedewed,  
The sunlight renewed,  
It's early, early, summer's advancing  
But autumn soon comes a-dancing!

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## **The Dove**

I saw a dove fear-daunted,  
By howling storm-blast driven;  
Where waves their power vaunted,  
From land it had been riven.  
No cry nor moan it uttered,  
I heard no plaint repeated;  
In vain its pinions fluttered --  
It had to sink, defeated.

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## **The Hare And The Fox**

The fox lay still by the birch-tree's root  
In the heather.  
The hare was running with nimble foot  
O'er the heather.  
Was ever brighter a sunshine-day,  
Before, behind me, and every way,  
O'er the heather!

The fox laughed low by the birch-tree's root  
In the heather.  
The hare was running with daring foot  
O'er the heather.

I am so happy for everything!  
Hallo! Why go you with mighty spring  
O'er the heather?

The fox lay hid by the birch-tree's root  
In the heather.  
The hare dashed to him with reckless foot  
O'er the heather.  
May God have mercy, but this is queer! --  
Good gracious, how dare you dance so here  
O'er the heather?

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## **The Maiden's Song**

Good-morning, sun, 'mid the leaves so green --  
Mind of youth in the dales' deep reaches,  
Smile that brightens their somber speeches,  
Heaven's gold on our earth-dust seen!

Good-morning, sun, o'er the royal tower!  
Kindly thou beckonest forth each maiden;  
Kindle each heart as a star light-laden,  
Twinkling so clear, though a sad night lower!

Good-morning, sun, o'er the mountain-side!  
Light the land that still sleep disguises  
Till it awakens and fresh arises  
For yonder day in thy warmth's full tide!

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## The Melody

The youth in the woods spent the whole day long,  
The whole day long;  
For there he had heard such a wonderful song,  
Wonderful song.

Willow-wood gave him a flute so fair,  
A flute so fair,--  
To try, if within were the melody rare,  
Melody rare.

Melody whispered and said: "I am here!"  
Said: "I am here!"  
But while he was listening, it fled from his ear,  
Fled from his ear.

Oft when he slept, it to him crept,  
It to him crept;  
And over his forehead in love it swept,  
In love it swept.

When he would seize it, his sleep took flight,  
His sleep took flight;  
The melody hung in the pallid night,  
In the pallid night.

"Lord, O my God, take me therein,  
Take me therein!  
The melody rare all my soul doth win,  
My soul doth win."

Answered the Lord: "'T is your friend alone,  
Your friend alone;  
Though never an hour you it shall own,  
You it shall own."

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## **The Mother's Song**

Lord! Oh, hold in Thy hand my child,  
Guard by the river its playing!  
Send Thou Thy Spirit as comrade mild,  
Lest it be lost in its straying!  
Deep is the water and false the ground.  
Lord, if His arms shall the child surround,  
Drowned it shall not be, but living,  
Till Thou salvation art giving.

Mother, whom loneliness befalls,  
Knowing not where it is faring,  
Goes to the door, and its name there calls;  
Breezes no answer are bearing.  
This is her thought, that everywhere  
He and Thou for it always care;  
Jesus, its little brother,  
Follows it home to mother.

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## The Ocean

... Oceanward I am ever yearning,  
Where far it rolls in its calm and grandeur,  
The weight of mountain-like fogbanks bearing,  
Forever wandering and returning.  
The skies may lower, the land may call it,  
It knows no resting and knows no yielding.  
In nights of summer, in storms of winter,  
Its surges murmur the self-same longing.

Yes, oceanward I am ever yearning,  
Where far is lifted its broad, cold forehead!  
Thereon the world throws its deepest shadow  
And mirrors whispering all its anguish.  
Though warm and blithesome the bright sun stroke it  
With joyous message, that life is gladness,  
Yet ice-cold, changelessly melancholy,  
It drowns the sorrow and drowns the solace.

The full moon pulling, the tempest lifting,  
Must loose their hold on the flowing water.  
Down whirling lowlands and crumbling mountains  
It to eternity tireless washes.  
What forth it draws must the one way wander.  
What once is sunken arises never.  
No message comes thence, no cry is heard thence;  
Its voice, its silence, can none interpret.

Yes, toward the ocean, far out toward ocean,  
That knows no hour of self-atonement!  
For all that suffer release it offers,  
But trails forever its own enigma.  
A strange alliance with Death unites it,  
That all it give Him,--itself excepting!

I feel, vast Ocean, thy solemn sadness,  
To thee abandon my weak devices,  
To thee let fly all my anxious longings:  
May thy cool breath to my heart bring healing!  
Let Death now follow, his booty seeking:  
The moves are many before the checkmate!  
Awhile I'll harass thy love of plunder,  
As on I scud 'neath thy angry eyebrows;  
Thou only fillest my swelling mainsail,  
Though Death ride fast on thy howling tempest;  
Thy billows raging shall bear the faster  
My little vessel to quiet waters.

Ah! Thus alone at the helm in darkness,  
By all forsaken, by Death forgotten,  
When sails unknown far away are wafted  
And some swift-coursing by night are passing,  
To note the ground-swell's resistless current,

The sighing heart of the breathing ocean --  
Or small waves plashing along the planking,  
Its quiet pastime amid its sadness.  
Then glide my lingering longings over  
Into the ocean-deep grief of nature,  
The night's, the water's united coldness  
Prepares my spirit for death's dark dwelling.

Then comes day's dawning! My soul bounds upward  
On beams of light to the vault of heaven;  
My ship-steed sniffing its flank is laving  
With buoyant zest in the cooling billow.  
With song the sailor to masthead clammers  
To clear the sail that shall swell more freely,  
And thoughts are flying like birds away  
Round mast and yard-arm, but find no refuge. ...  
Yes, toward the ocean! To follow Vikar!  
To sail like him and to sink as he did,  
For great King Olaf the prow defending!  
With keel unswerving the cold thought cleaving,  
But hope deriving from lightest breezes!  
Death's eager fingers so near the rudder,  
While heaven's clearness the way illumines!

And then at last in the final hour  
To feel the bolts and the nails are yielding  
And Death is pressing the seams asunder,  
That in may stream the absolving water!  
Wet winding-sheets shall be folded round me,  
And I descend to eternal silence,  
While rolling billows my name bear shoreward  
In spacious nights 'neath the cloudless moonlight!

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## **The Princess**

The princess looked down from her bower high,  
The youth blew his horn as he lingered thereby.  
"Be quiet, O youth, will forever you blow?  
It hinders my thoughts, that would far away go,  
Now, when sets the sun."

The princess looked down from her bower high,  
The youth ceased his blowing, his horn he laid by.  
"Why are you so quiet? Now more shall you blow,  
It lifts all my thoughts, that would far away go,  
Now, when sets the sun."

The princess looked down from her bower high,  
The youth blew again, as he lingered thereby.  
Then weeping, she whispered: "O God, let me know  
The name of this sorrow that burdens me so! --  
Now has set the sun."

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## **The Tree**

Ready with leaves and with buds stood the tree.  
"Shall I take them?" the frost said, now puffing with glee.  
    "Oh my, no, let them stand,  
    Till flowers are at hand!"  
All trembling from tree-top to root came the plea.

Flowers unfolding the birds gladly sung.  
"Shall I take them?" the wind said and merrily swung.  
    "Oh my, no, let them stand,  
    Till cherries are at hand!"  
Protested the tree, while it quivering hung.

The cherries came forth 'neath the sun's glowing eye.  
"Shall I take them?" a rosy young girl's eager cry.  
    "Oh my, yes, you can take,  
    I've kept them for your sake!"  
Low bending its branches, the tree brought them nigh.

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

## Venevil

Fair Venevil hastened with tripping feet  
Her lover to meet.  
He sang, so it rang o'er the church far away:  
"Good-day! Good-day!"

And all the little birds sang right merrily their lay:  
"Midsummer Day  
Brings us laughter and play;  
But later know I little, if she twines her wreath so gay!"

She twined him a wreath of the flowers blue:  
"My eyes for you!"  
He tossed it and caught it and to her did bend:  
"Good-by, my friend!"  
And loudly he exulted at the field's far distant end:  
"Midsummer Day  
Brings us laughter and play;  
But later know I little, if she twines her wreath so gay!"

She twined him a wreath: "Do at all you care  
For my golden hair?"  
She twined one, and gave in life's hour so rare  
Her red lips' pair;  
He took them and he pressed them, and he blushed as she did there.

She twined one all white as a lily-band:  
"T is my right hand."  
She twined one blood-red, with her love in each strand:  
"T is my left hand."  
He took them both and kept them both, but would not understand.

She twined of the flowers that bloomed around  
"Every one I found!"  
She gathered and twined, while tears would her eyes fill:  
"Take them you will!"  
In silence then he took them, but to flight he turned him still.

She twined one so large, of discordant hue:  
"My bride's-wreath true!"  
She twined it and twined, till her fingers were sore:  
"Crown me, I implore!"  
But when she turned, he was not there, she never saw him more.

She twined yet undaunted without a stay  
At her bride's-array.  
But now it was long past the Midsummer Day,  
All the flowers away:  
She twined it of the flowers, though they all were now away!  
"Midsummer Day  
Brings us laughter and play;  
But later know I little, if she twines her wreath so gay!"

Bjornstjerne Bjornson