Classic Poetry Series

Robert Henryson

- poems -

Publication Date:

2004

Publisher:

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

Robin and Makyne

ROBIN sat on gude green hill,
Kepand a flock of fe:
Mirry Makyne said him till
'Robin, thou rew on me:
I haif thee luvit, loud and still,
Thir yeiris twa or thre;
My dule in dern bot gif thou dill,
Doutless but dreid I de.'

Robin answerit 'By the Rude
Na thing of luve I knaw,
But keipis my scheip undir yon wud:
Lo, quhair they raik on raw.
Quhat has marrit thee in thy mude,
Makyne, to me thou shaw;
Or quhat is luve, or to be lude?
Fain wad I leir that law.'

'At luvis lair gif thou will leir
Tak thair ane A B C;
Be heynd, courtass, and fair of feir,
Wyse, hardy, and free:
So that no danger do thee deir
Quhat dule in dern thou dre;
Preiss thee with pain at all poweir
Be patient and previe.'

Robin answerit hir agane,
'I wat nocht quhat is lufe;
But I haif mervel in certaine
Quhat makis thee this wanrufe:
The weddir is fair, and I am fain;
My scheip gois haill aboif;
And we wald prey us in this plane,
They wald us baith reproif.'

'Robin, tak tent unto my tale,
And wirk all as I reid,
And thou sall haif my heart all haill,
Eik and my maiden-heid:
Sen God sendis bute for baill,
And for murnyng remeid,
In dern with thee bot gif I daill
Dowtles I am bot deid.'

'Makyne, to-morn this ilka tyde
And ye will meit me heir,
Peraventure my scheip may gang besyde,
Quhyle we haif liggit full neir;
But mawgre haif I, and I byde,
Fra they begin to steir;
Quhat lyis on heart I will nocht hyd;

Makyn, then mak gude cheir.'

'Robin, thou reivis me roiff and rest;
I luve bot thee allane.'
'Makyne, adieu! the sone gois west,
The day is neir-hand gane.'
'Robin, in dule I am so drest
That luve will be my bane.'
'Ga luve, Makyne, quhair-evir thow list,
For lemman I luve nane.'

'Robin, I stand in sic a styll,
 I sicht and that full sair.'
'Makyne, I haif been here this quhyle;
 At hame God gif I wair.'
'My huny, Robin, talk ane quhyll,
 Gif thow will do na mair.'
'Makyn, sum uthir man begyle,
 For hamewart I will fair.'

Robin on his wayis went
As light as leif of tre;
Makyne murnit in hir intent,
And trowd him nevir to se.
Robin brayd attour the bent:
Then Makyne cryit on hie,
'Now may thow sing, for I am schent!
Quhat alis lufe at me?'

Makyne went hame withowttin fail,
Full wery eftir cowth weip;
Then Robin in a ful fair daill
Assemblit all his scheip.
Be that sum part of Makynis aill
Out-throw his hairt cowd creip;
He fallowit hir fast thair till assaill,
And till her tuke gude keip.

'Abyd, abyd, thow fair Makyne,
A word for ony thing;
For all my luve, it sall be thyne,
Withowttin departing.
All haill thy hairt for till haif myne
Is all my cuvating;
My scheip to-morn, quhyle houris nyne,
Will neid of no keping.'

'Robin, thow hes hard soung and say,
In gestis and storeis auld,
The man that will nocht quhen he may
Sall haif nocht quhen he wald.
I pray to Jesu every day,

Mot eik thair cairis cauld That first preissis with thee to play Be firth, forrest, or fauld.'

'Makyne, the nicht is soft and dry,
The weddir is warme and fair,
And the grene woid rycht neir us by
To walk attour all quhair:
Thair ma na janglour us espy,
That is to lufe contrair;
Thairin, Makyne, baith ye and I,
Unsene we ma repair.'

'Robin, that warld is all away,
And quyt brocht till ane end:
And nevir agane thereto, perfay,
Sall it be as thow wend;
For of my pane thow maid it play;
And all in vane I spend:
As thow hes done, sa sall I say,
"Murne on, I think to mend."

'Makyne, the howp of all my heill,
My hairt on thee is sett;
And evirmair to thee be leill
Quhill I may leif but lett;
Never to faill as utheris feill,
Quhat grace that evir I gett.'
'Robin, with thee I will nocht deill;
Adieu! for thus we mett.'

Makyne went hame blyth anneuche Attour the holttis hair;
Robin murnit, and Makyne leuche;
Scho sang, he sichit sair:
And so left him baith wo and wreuch,
In dolour and in cair,
Kepand his hird under a huche
Amangis the holttis hair.

Robin and Malkin

Robene sat on gud grene hill, Kepand a flok of fe; Mirry Makyne said him till, "Robene, thow rew on me; I haif the luvit lowd and still, Thir yeiris two or thre; My dule in dern bot gif thow dill, Dowtless but dreid I de."

Robene answerit, "Be the rude,
Nathing of lufe I knaw,
Bot keipis my scheip undir yone wid,
Lo quhair they raik on raw:
Quhat hes marrit the in thy mude,
Makyne, to me thow schaw;
Or quhat is lufe, or to be lude?
Fane wald I leir that law."

"At luvis lair gife thow will leir,
Tak thair ane a b c;
Be heynd, courtass, and fair of feir,
Wyse, hardy, and fre;
So that no denger do the deir,
Quhat dule in dern thow dre;
Preiss the with pane at all poweir,
Be patient and previe."

Robene anserit hir agane,
"I wait nocht quhat is luve;
But I haif mervell in certane
Quhat makis the this wanrufe:
The weddir is fair, and I am fane,
My scheip gois haill aboif;
And we wald play us in this plane,
Thay wald us bayth reproif."

"Robene, tak tent unto my taill,
And wirk all as I reid,
And thow sall haif my hairt all haill,
Eik and my maidenheid.
Sen God sendis bute for baill
And for murnyng remeid,
In dern with the bot gif I daill,
Dowtles I am bot deid."

"Makyne, to morne this ilk a tyde,
And ye will meit me heir,-Peraventure my scheip may gang besyd,
Quhill we haif liggit full neir;
Bot mawgre haif I and I byd,
Fra thay begin to steir;
Quhat lyis on hairt I will nocht hyd;

Makyn, than mak gud cheir."

"Robene, thow reivis me roif and rest;
I luve bot the allane."

"Makyne, adew, the sone gois west,
The day is neir hand gane."

"Robene, in dule I am so drest,
That lufe wilbe my bane."

"Ga lufe, Makyne, quhair evir thow list,
For lemman I lue nane."

"Robene, I stand in sic a styll;
I sicht, and that full sair."
"Makyne, I haif bene heir this quhyle;
At hame God gif I wair."
"My huny, Robene, talk ane quhyle,
Gif thow will do na mair."
"Makyne, sum uthir man begyle,
For hamewart I will fair."

Robene on his wayis went
Als licht as leif of tre;
Mawkin murnit in hir intent,
And trowd him nevir to se.
Robene brayd attour the bent;
Than Mawkyne cryit on hie,
"Now ma thow sing, for I am schent!
Quhat alis lufe at me?"

Mawkyne went hame withowttin faill,
Full wery eftir cowth weip.
Than Robene in a ful fair daill
Assemblit all his scheip.
Be that sum pairte of Mawkynis aill
Outthrow his hairt cowd creip;
He fallowit hir fast thair till assaill,
And till hir tuke gude keip.

"Abyd, abyd, thow fair Makyne,
A word for ony thing;
For all my luve it sal be thyne,
Withowttin depairting.
All haill thy harte for till haif myne
Is all my cuvating;
My scheip to morne quhill houris nyne
Will neid of no keping."

"Robene, thow hes hard soung and say, In gestis and storeis auld, 'The man that will nocht quhen he may Sall haif nocht quhen he wald.' I pray to Jesu every day Mot eik thair cairis cauld, That first preissis with the to play, Be firth, forrest, or fauld."

"Makyne, the nicht is soft and dry,
The wedder is warme and fair,
And the grene woid rycht neir us by
To walk attour all quhair;
Thair ma na janglour us espy,
That is to lufe contrair;
Thairin, Makyne, bath ye and I
Unsene we ma repair."

"Robene, that warld is all away
And quyt brocht till ane end,
And nevir agane thairto perfay
Sall it be as thow wend;
For of my pane thow maid it play,
And all in vane I spend;
As thow hes done, sa sall I say,
Murne on, I think to mend."

"Mawkyne, the howp of all my heill,
My hairt on the is sett,
And evirmair to the be leill,
Quhill I may leif but lett;
Nevir to faill, as utheris feill,
Quhat grace that evir I gett."
"Robene, with the I will nocht deill;
Adew, for thus we mett."

Malkyne went hame blyth annewche,
Attour the holttis hair;
Robene murnit, and Makyne lewche;
Scho sang, he sichit sair;
And so left him, bayth wo and wrewche,
In dolour and in cair,
Kepand his hird under a huche,
Amangis the holtis hair.

The Bludy Serk

THIS hinder yeir I hard be tald Thair was a worthy King; Dukis, Erlis, and Barronis bald, He had at his bidding. The Lord was ancean and ald, And sexty yeiris cowth ring; He had a dochter fair to fald, A lusty Lady ying.

Off all fairheid scho bur the flour,
And eik hir faderis air;
Off lusty laitis and he honour,
Meik bot and debonair:
Scho wynnit in a bigly bour,
On fold wes nane so fair,
Princis luvit hir paramour
In cuntreis our allquhair.

Thair dwelt a lyt besyde the King A foull Gyand of ane; Stollin he has the Lady ying, Away with hir is gane, And kest her in his dungering Quhair licht scho micht se nane; Hungir and cauld and grit thristing Scho fand into hir waine.

He wes the laithliest on to luk
That on the grund mycht gang:
His nailis wes lyk ane hellis cruk,
Thairwith fyve quarteris lang;
Thair wes nane that he ourtuk,
In rycht or yit in wrang,
Bot all in schondir he thame schuk,
The Gyand wes so strang.

He held the Lady day and nycht
Within his deip dungeoun,
He wald nocht gif of hir a sicht
For gold nor yit ransoun-Bot gif the King mycht get a knycht,
To fecht with his persoun,
To fecht with him beth day and nycht,
Quhill ane wer dungin doun.

The King gart seik baith fer and neir,
Beth be se and land,
Off ony knycht gif he mycht heir
Wald fecht with that Gyand:
A worthy Prince, that had no peir,
Hes tane the deid on hand
For the luve of the Lady cleir,

And held full trew cunnand.

That Prince come prowdly to the toun
Of that Gyand to heir,
And fawcht with him, his awin persoun,
And tuke him presoneir,
And kest him in his awin dungeoun
Allane withouten feir,
With hungir, cauld, and confusioun,
As full weill worthy weir.

Syne brak the bour, had hame the bricht
Unto her fadir fre.
Sa evill wondit wes the Knycht
That he behuvit to de;
Unlusum was his likame dicht,
His sark was all bludy;
In all the world was thair a wicht
So peteouss for to se?

The Lady murnyt and maid grit mane,
With all her mekill mycht-'I luvit nevir lufe bot ane,
That dulfully now is dicht;
God sen my lyfe were fra me tane
Or I had seen yone sicht,
Or ellis in begging evir to gane
Furth with yone curtass knycht.'

He said 'Fair lady, now mone I
De, trestly ye me trow;
Take ye my serk that is bludy,
And hing it forrow yow;
First think on it, and syne on me,
Quhen men cumis yow to wow.'
The Lady said 'Be Mary fre,
Thairto I mak a vow.'

Quhen that scho lukit to the sark
Scho thocht on the persoun,
And prayit for him with all hir hart
That lowsit hir of bandoun,
Quhair scho was wont to sit full merk
Into that deip dungeoun;
And evir quhill scho wes in quert,
That was hir a lessoun.

Sa weill the Lady luvit the Knycht That no man wald scho tak: Sa suld we do our God of micht That did all for us mak; Quhilk fullily to deid was dicht,

For sinfull manis sak, Sa suld we do beth day and nycht, With prayaris to him mak.

This King is lyk the Trinitie,
Baith in hevin and heir;
The manis saule to the Lady,
The Gyand to Lucefeir,
The Knycht to Chryst, that deit on tre
And coft our synnis deir;
The pit to Hele with panis fell,
The Syn to the woweir.

The Lady was wowd, but scho said nay With men that wald hir wed; Sa suld we wryth all sin away That in our breist is bred. I pray to Jesu Chryst verray, For ws his blud that bled, To be our help on domisday Quhair lawis ar straitly led.

The saule is Godis dochtir deir,
And eik his handewerk,
That was betrayit with Lucefeir,
Quha sittis in hell full merk:
Borrowit with Chrystis angell cleir,
Hend men, will ye nocht herk?
And for his lufe that bocht us deir
Think on the BLUDY SERK!

The Testament of Cressida (excerpt)

. . .

Thus chydand with her drerie destenye, Weiping, scho woik the nicht fra end to end; Bot all in vane; hir dule, hir cairfull cry, Micht not remeid, nor yit hir murning mend. Ane lipper lady rais, and till hir wend, And said, "Quhy spurnis thow aganis the wall, To sla thyself, and mend nathing at all?

"Sen thy weiping dowbillis bot thy wo,
I counsall the mak vertew of ane neid;
To leir to clap thy clapper to and fro,
And leir efter the law of lipper leid."
Thair was na buit, bot furth with thame scho yeid,
Fra place to place, quhill cauld and hounger sair
Compellit hir to be ane rank beggair.

That samin tyme of Troy the garnisoun, Quhilk had to chiftane worthie Troylus, Throw jeopardie of weir had strikken down Knichtis of Grece in number marvellous: With greit tryumphe and laude victorious Agane to Troy richt royallie they raid, The way quhair Cresseid with the lipper baid.

Seing that companie, thai come all with ane stevin; Thay gaif ane cry, and schuik coppis gude speid; Said, "Worthie lordis, for Goddis lufe of hevin, To us lipper part of your almous deid." Than to thair cry nobill Troylus tuik heid, Having pietie, neir by the place can pas Quhair Cresseid sat, not witting guhat scho was.

Than upon him scho kest up baith her ene, And with ane blenk it come into his thocht That he sumtime hir face befoir had sene; But scho was in sic plye he knew hir nocht; Yit than hir luik into his mynd it brocht The sweit visage and amorous blenking Of fair Cresseid, sumtyme his awin darling.

Na wonder was, suppois in mynd that he Tuik hir figure sa sone, and lo! now quhy! The idole of ane thing in cace may be Sa deip imprentit in the fantasy, That it deludis the wittis outwardly, And sa appeiris in forme and lyke estait Within the mynd, as it was figurait.

Ane spark of lufe than till his hart culd spring, And kendlit all his bodie in ane fyre, With hait fevir ane sweit and trimbling Him tuik, quhill he was reddie to expyre; To beir his scheild his breist began to tyre; Within ane quhyle he changit mony hew, And, nevertheles, not ane ane uther knew.

For knichtlie pietie and memoriall
Of fair Cresseid, ane gyrdill can he tak,
Ane purs of gold, and mony gay jowall,
And in the skirt of Cresseid doun can swak:
Than raid away, and not ane word he spak,
Pensive in hart, quhill he come to the toun,
And for greit cair oft syis almaist fell doun.

The lipper folk to Cresseid than can draw, To se the equall distributioun
Of the almous; but quhan the gold they saw, Ilk ane to uther prevelie can roun, And said, "Yone lord hes mair affectioun, How ever it be, unto yone lazarous, Than to us all; we knaw be his almous."

"Quhat lord is yone," (quod scho), "have ye na feill, Hes done to us so greit humanitie?"
"Yes," (quod a lipper man), "I knaw him weill; Schir Troylus it is, gentill and fre."
Quhen Cresseid understude that it was he, Stiffer than steill thair stert ane bitter stound Throwout hir hart, and fell doun to the ground.

Quhen scho, ouircome with siching sair and sad, With many cairfull cry and cald "Ochane! Now is my breist with stormie stoundis stad, Wrappit in wo, ane wretch full will of wane:" Than swounit scho oft or scho culd refrane, And ever in hir swouning cryit scho thus: "O, fals Cresseid, and trew knicht Troylus!

"Thy lufe, thy lawtie, and thy gentilnes I countit small in my prosperitie; Sa elevait I was in wantones, And clam upon the fickill quheill sa hie; All faith and lufe I promissit to the Was in the self fickill and frivolous: O, fals Cresseid, and trew knicht Troilus!

"For lufe of me thow keipt gude continence, Honest and chaist in conversatioun; Of all wemen protectour and defence Thou was, and helpit thair opinioun: My mynd in fleschelie foull affectioun Was inclynit to lustis lecherous: Fy, fals Cresseid! O, trew knicht Troylus! "Lovers, be war, and tak gude heid about Quhome that ye lufe, for quhome ye suffer paine; I lat yow wit, thair is richt few thairout Quhome ye may traist to have trew lufe agane: Preif quhen ye will, your labour is in vaine; Thairfoir, I reid ye tak thame as ye find, For thay ar sad as widdercock in wind,

"Becaus I knaw the greit unstabilnes, Brukkil as glas, into my self, I say, Traisting in uther als greit unfaithfulnes, Als unconstant, and als untrew of fay; Thocht sum be trew, I wait richt few are thay; Quha findis treuth, lat him his lady ruse: Nane but my self, as now, I will accuse."

Quhen this was said, with paper scho sat doun, And on this maneir maid hir testament:
"Heir I beteiche my corps and carioun With wormis and with taidis to be rent; My cop and clapper, and myne ornament, And all my gold, the lipper folk sall have, Quhen I am deid, to burie me in grave.

"This royall ring, set with this rubie reid, Quhilk Troylus in drowrie to me send, To him agane I leif it quhan I am deid, To mak my cairfull deid unto him kend: Thus I conclude schortlie, and mak ane end; My spreit I leif to Diane, quhair scho dwellis, To walk with hir in waist woddis and wellis.

"O, Diomeid! thow hes baith broche and belt Quhilk Troylus gave me in takning Of his trew lufe,"--and with that word scho swelt; And sone ane lipper man tuik of the ring, Syne buryit hir withouttin tarying: To Troylus furthwith the ring he bair, And of Cresseid the deith he can declair.

Quhen he had hard hir greit infirmitie, Hir legacie and lamentatioun, And how scho endit in sic povertie, He swelt for wo, and fell doun in ane swoun; For greit sorrow his hart to birst was boun: Siching full sadlie, said, "I can no moir; Scho was untrew, and wo is me thairfoir!"

Sum said he maid ane tomb of merbell gray, And wrait hir name and superscriptioun, And laid it on hir grave, guhair that scho lay, In goldin letteris, conteining this ressoun: "Lo, fair ladyis, Cresseid of Troyis toun, Sumtyme countit the flour of womanheid, Under this stane, late lipper, lyis deid!"

Now, worthie wemen, in this ballet schort, Made for your worschip and instructioun, Of cheritie I monische and exhort, Ming not your lufe with fals deceptioun; Beir in your mynd this schort conclusioun Of fair Cresseid, as I have said befoir: Sen scho is deid, I speik of hir no moir.