

The three ravens

There were three ravens sat on a tree,
They were as black as they might be.
The one of them said to his mate,
'Where shall we our breakfast take?'

'Down in yonder greene field
There lies a knight slain under his shield;
'His hounds they lie down at his feet,
So well they can their master keep;

'His hawks they flie so eagerly,
There 's no fowl dare come him nigh.'
Down there comes a fallow doe
As great with young as she might goe.

She lift up his bloody head
And kist his wounds that were so red.
She gat him up upon her back
And carried him to earthen lake.

She buried him before the prime,
She was dead herself ere evensong time.
God send every gentleman
Such hounds, such hawks, and such a leman.

This merry pleasant spring

This merry pleasant spring,
Hark, how the sweet birds sing,
And warble in the copse and on the briers.
Jug jug jug jug jug! The nightingale delivers.
Yet, yet, yet, yet, the sparrow sings his hot
desires;
The robin doth record;
The lark, he quivers.
O sweet, sweet as ever,
From strains so sweet, sweet birds deprive us
never.

The nightingale

The Nightingale, the Organ of delight,
the nimble Lark, the Blackbird, and the Thrush,
and all the pretty quiristers of flight,
that chant their Music notes in ev'ry bush:
Let them no more contend who shall excel,
the Cuckoo is the bird that bears the bell.

Pastime with good company

1 Pastime with good company
I love, and shall until I die.
Gruch who lust but none deny,
So God be pleas'd thus live will I.
For my pastance, hunt, sing, and dance,
my heart is set all goodly sport,
for my comfort, who shall me let?

2 Youth must have some dalliance,
of good or ill some pastance.
Company methinks then best,
all thoughts and fancies to digest.
For idleness is chief mistress
of vices all then who can say
but mirth and play is best of all.

3 Company with honesty,
Is virtue, vices to flee.
Company is good and ill,
but every man hath his free will.
The best ensue, the worst eschew,
my mind shall be virtue to use,
vice to refuse, thus shall I use me.

Blow thy horn, hunter

1 Blow thy horn, hunter,
And blow thy horn on high!
There is a doe in yonder wood,
In faith she will not die:

*Now blow thy horn, hunter,
Now blow thy horn, jolly hunter!*

2 Sore this deer stricken is,
And yet she bleeds no whit;
She lay so fair, I could not miss,
Lord, I was glad of it:
Now blow...

3 There she go'th! See ye not,
How she go'th over the plain?
And if ye lust to gave a shot,
I warrant her barrain.
Now blow...

4 He to go and I to go,
But he ran fast afore;
I bade him shoot and strike the doe,
For I might shoot no more.
Now blow...

5 To the covert both they went,
For I found where she lay;
An arrow in her haunch she hent,
For faint she might not bray.
Now blow...

6 Here I leave and make an end
Now of this hunter's lore:
I think his bow is well unbent,
His bolt may flee no more.
Now blow...

(continued)

Tomorrow is St Valentine's day

Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.

Then up he rose, and donned his clothes,
And dugged the chamber door.
Let in the maid that out a maid
Never departed more.

By Gis [Jesus] and by Saint Charity,
Alack, and fie, for shame!
Young men will do 't, if they come to 't.
By Cock [God], they are to blame.

Quoth she, "Before you tumbled me,
You promised me to wed."
(*He answers*)
"So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,
An thou hadst not come to my bed."

Willow, willow

The poor soul sat sighing
By a sycamore tree,
Sing willow, willow, willow,
With her hand in her bosom
And her head upon her knee,
Oh, willow, willow, willow,
Shall be my garland.
Sing all a green willow,
Aye me, the green willow
Must be my garland.

The mute bird sat by her
Was made tame by her moans,
Sing willow, willow, willow
The true tears fell from her
Would have melted the stones.
Sing ...

Come all you forsaken
And mourn you with me.
Sing willow, willow, willow
Who speaks of a false love?
Mine's falser than he.
Sing ...

Take this for my farewell
And latest adieu;
Sing willow, willow, willow
Write this on my tomb
That in love I was true.
Sing ...

O Death

O Death, rock me asleep,
Bring me to quiet rest,
Let pass my weary guiltless ghost,
Out of my woeful breast.
Toll on the passing bell,
Ring out the doleful knell,

Let the sound of my death tell.

For I must dye,
There is no remedye,
For now I dye.

Farewell my pleasures past,
Welcum my present payne,
I feel my torments so increase,
That lyfe cannot remayne.
Cease now the passing bell,
Rung is my doleful knell,
For the sound my death doth tell.
Death doth draw nye,
Sound my end dolefully,
For now I dye.

The nightingale

The nightingale, as soon as April bringeth
Unto her rested sense a perfect waking,
While late bare earth, proud of new clothing,
springeth,
Sings out her woes, a thorn her song-book
making,
And mournfully bewailing,
Her throat in tunes expresseth
What grief her breast oppresseth.

Sweet Suffolk owl

Sweet Suffolk owl, so trimly dight,
With feathers like a lady bright,
Thou sing'st alone, sitting by night:
Te-whit, te-whoo...
Thy note, that forth so freely rolls,
With shrill command the mouse controls,
And sings a dirge for dying souls:
Te-whit, te-whoo...

The twa corbies

As I was walking all alone
I heard two ravens making moan
And one unto the other did say,
"Where shall we go and dine today?"

"Behind that old turf-wall
I know there lies a newly slain knight
And nobody knows that he lies there,
But his hawk and his hound and his lady fair.

"His hound has gone hunting,
His hawk has gone to catch wildfowl,
His lady has taken another mate,
So we may make our dinner sweet.

"You'll sit on his white neck-bone
And I'll bite out his beautiful blue eyes;
With many a lock of his golden hair,
We'll cover our nest when it grows bare.

"Many a one will him mourn
But none shall know where he has gone
For his white bones, when they are bare,
The wind shall blow forevermore."

