

A. C. Swinburne (1837-1909)

15 *The King's Ae Son*

Quo' the bracken-bush to the wan well-head,
"O whatten a man is this man dead?"

"O this is the King's ae son," quo' she,
"That lies here dead upon my knee."

"What will ye do wi' the King's ae son?" 5
"The little fishes shall feed him on."

"What will ye strew for his body's bed?"
"Green stanes aneath his head."

"What will ye gie for his body's grace?"
"Green leaves abune his face." 10

"What will ye do wi' the rings on his hand?"
"Hide them ower wi' stane and sand."

"What will ye do wi' the gowd in his hair?"
"Hide it ower wi' rushes fair."

"What will he have when the hill winds blow?" 15
"Cauld rain and routh of snow."

"What shall he get when the birds fly in?"
"Death for sorrow, and sorrow for sin."

"What shall come to his father, the King?"
"Long life and a heavy thing." 20

"What shall come to his mother, the Queen?"
"Grey hairs and a bitter teen."

“What to his leman, that garr’d him be slain?”

“Hell’s pit and hell’s pain.”

1877

(From *Ballads of the English Border*. Ed. with Introduction, Glossary and Notes by William A. MacInnes. London: William Heinemann, 1925)