

A. C. Swinburne (1837-1909)

5 *Border Ballad*

The leaves are green in the good summer,  
The grass is green and long,  
Frae the Ailsenshaw to the wat Wellhaugh  
The sun was set and strong.

O the Earl's seat is wat wi' dew, 5  
And the way is hard to see;  
She's ca'd to her her bower-maidens,  
She's ca'd them a' but three.

The tane o' thae was her girdle-maid,  
The tane looked ower the wa', 10  
The third sat in the south chamber,  
And that was warst of a'.

When they came ower by O Hershaw  
They were twenty men to see;  
When they came back frae the Ailsenshaw, 15  
They were but ane and three.

"Often have I gane this way  
Ayont the Earl's seat;  
But now I maun gang this way  
Wi' fetters on my feet. 20

Often have I gane this way  
Wi' twenty men and three,  
But ever the best of a' my men  
Are dead for love o' me."

1918

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