

A. C. Swinburne (1837-1909)

6 *The Bride's Tragedy*

The wind wears roun', the day wears doun,
The moon is grisly grey;
There's nae man rides by the mirk muirsides,
Nor down the dark Tyne's way."
In, in, out and in, 5
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

"And winna ye watch the night wi' me,
And winna ye wake the morn?
Foul shame it were that your ae mither
Should brook her ae son's scorn." 10
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

"O mither, I may not sleep nor stay,
My weird is ill to dree;
For a fause faint lord of the south seaboard 15
Wad win my bride of me."
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

"The winds are strang, and the nights are lang,
And the ways are sair to ride: 20
And I maun gang to wreak my wrang,
And ye maun bide and bide.
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

"Gin I maun bide and bide, Willie. 25
I wot my weird is sair:
Weel may ye get ye a light love yet,
But never a mither mair."

In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin. 30

“O gin the morrow be great wi’ sorrow,
The wyte be yours of a’:
But though ye slay me that haud and stay me,
The weird ye will maun fa’.”
In, in, out and in, 35
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

When cocks were crawing and day was dawing,
He’s boun’ him forth to ride:
And the ae first may he’s met that day
Was fause Earl Robert’s bride. 40
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

O blithe and braw were the bride-folk a’,
But sad and saft rade she;
And sad as doom was her fause bridegroom, 45
But fair and fain was he.
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

And winna ye bide, sae saft ye ride,
And winna ye speak wi’ me? 50
For mony’s the word and the kindly word,
I have spoken aft wi’ thee.”
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

My lamp was lit yestreen, Willie, 55
My window- gate was wide:
But ye camena nigh me till day came by me
And made me not your bride.”
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin. 60

He's set his hand to her bridle-rein,
He's turned her horse away:
And the cry was sair, and the wrath was mair,
And fast and fain rode they.
In, in, out and in, 65
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

But when they came by Chollerford,
I wot the ways were fell;
For broad and brown the spate swang down,
And the lift was mirk as hell. 70
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

“And will ye ride yon fell water,
Or will ye bide for fear?
Nae scathe ye'll win o' your father's kin,
Though they should slay me here.” 75
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

“I had liefer ride yon fell water,
Though strange it be to ride, 80
Than I wad stand on the fair green strand
And thou be slain beside.”
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

“I had liefer swim yon wild water, 85
Though sair it be to bide,
Than I wad stand at a strange man's hand,
To be a strange man's bride.”
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin. 90

“I had liefer drink yon dark water,
Wi' the stanes to make my bed,
And the faem to hide me, and thou beside me,

Than I wad see thee dead.”
In, in, out and in, 95
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

He’s kissed her twice, he’s kissed her thrice,
On cheek and lip and chin:
He’s wound her rein to his hand again,
And lightly they leapt in. 100
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

Their hearts were high to live or die,
Their steeds were stark of limb:
But the stream was starker, the spate was darker, 105
Than man might live and swim.
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

The first ae step they strode therein,
It smote them foot and knee: 110
But ere they wan to the mid water
The spate was as the sea.
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

But when they wan to the mid water, 115
It smote them hand and head:
And nae man knows but the wave that flows
Where they lie drowned and dead.
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin. 120

1889

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