

The Silver Hound



and other songs
by

Betty Roe

Sarah Leonard | soprano

Anne Marie Sheridan | soprano

Robin Tritschler | tenor

Stephen Varcoe | baritone

Daniel Beer | french horn

Madeleine Mitchell | violin

Emma Murphy | recorder

Nigel Foster | piano



métier

The Silver Hound *and other Songs by* Betty Roe (b.1930)

1	I Know a Bank ^{1,5}	3:04
2	In a Garden ¹	3:37
Two Garden Songs ^{1,6}		
3	In this Lone, Open Glade	6:50
4	The Critic	2:50
5	Magnificat ²	3:43
6	The Silver Hound ^{3,7}	12:24
7	The Fair Singer ³	3:04
Three Songs for Graham ⁴		
8	The Dream House	2:31
9	The Promising Gardener	2:12
10	Scooting	2:16
11	Diva's Lament ¹	3:20
Three Hardy Conversations ^{2,4}		
12	A Wife Waits	2:25
13	Father Dunman's Funeral	1:39
14	The Orphaned Old Maid	2:12
15	The Life that I Have ^{2,5}	2:43
16	Autumn's Legacy ¹	3:50
Three Celtic Songs ^{2,5}		
17	A Cradle Song	2:18
18	A Boy's Song	1:49
19	The Fiddler of Dooney	2:59
Total playing time:		65:52

¹Sarah Leonard (soprano) / ²Anne Marie Sheridan (soprano) / ³Robin Tritschler (tenor)

⁴Stephen Varcoe (baritone) / ⁵Emma Murphy (recorder) / ⁶Madeleine Mitchell (violin)

⁷Daniel Beer (French horn) / All tracks: Nigel Foster (piano)

The composer and her songs

Betty Roe's compositions, like many Baroque composers, are those of a resourceful pragmatist, providing music for a particular group of musicians or occasion. Although her compositions include a Trumpet concerto and six operas, Roe considers herself a miniaturist with solo songs at the heart of her work. Amongst over 300 vocal works, this approach has led to some unusual combinations of voices and instruments and settings of some challenging texts; either because selected by the commissioners or that they were appropriate for a particular performance. Roe recalls that her first compositions were to fill her own performance needs and, at the time, she felt that if there were not already an appropriate work, you should compose it. In 2011, Betty Roe was awarded an MBE for services to Classical Music and to Composition.

This recording focuses on some of Betty Roe's vocal compositions from the last 30 years, a late flowering of her compositional style for concert pieces, creating a natural melodic flow and often incorporating elements of her popular music theatre and cabaret works.

Betty Roe's late husband, John Bishop, was an active member of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society. Through this connection, Betty Roe collaborated with Ursula Vaughan Williams on their one act opera, *Canterbury Morning*. Further collaboration followed at the author's request and *The Silver Hound* was premièred at a concert to mark the composer's 60th birthday. The poem follows the structure of Jacques' Seven Ages of Man speech from *As you like it* with the singer sending the hound back in time to fetch events from his life. Roe matches each period paring the music down to solo voice for the soldier as he recalls the horror of war followed by a meditation for the horn, here played by the composer's grandson. In the Prologue, Irish tenor, Robin Tritschler floats an E flat above top C.

In the *Three Celtic Songs*, the recorder adds a different element to each song. In *A Cradle Song* it is the mother gently crooning, then a cheerful whistle to *A Boy's Song* and finally the fiddler's infectious jig in *The Fiddler of Dooney* as he dances off into the distance. *A Cradle Song* is generally considered a Christmas song about the shepherds

coming in to see the baby Jesus. Irish Soprano, Anne Marie Sheridan gives the songs an authentic lilt.

The words of *The Life That I Have* were originally a World War II code poem designed to be memorable and enable messages to be decoded without needing a code book. The poem featured in the 1958 film, *Carve Her Name with Pride* and is attributed to Leo Marks.

The *Three Hardy Conversations* cover an array of Thomas Hardy's Wessex characters: a wife that hoped she could reform her husband; a particularly jolly farmer contemplating his funeral arrangements and the old maid who stayed at home to look after her father.

Swinburne's poem *In a Garden* imagines the thoughts passing through a baby's mind as it lies in its cradle in a garden by the sea. Under a gently rocking melody, Roe adds the wind, waves and the sound of distant bells. The song was written to celebrate the birth of the Composer's first great grandchild in December 2009.

Autumn's Legacy is dedicated to its poet, Lewis Foreman and this setting was commissioned to celebrate his 70th birthday. An old man considers the cycle of the seasons and wonders how many more he will see.

In *The Fair Singer*, the Restoration poet, Andrew Marvell, compares love to a battle. For him, her love is like an enemy and he has been taken prisoner. The poet feels he might resist a woman with only one attraction; hair or eyes, but not both. Roe's music underlines the ardour of the young man's love with a racing pulse in the accompaniment.

The *Two Garden Songs* are strongly contrasting works. *In this Lone Open Glade* sets lines from Malcolm Arnold's *Lines Written in Kensington Gardens*. In the peace of a garden away from the traffic, the singer finds a moment of calm. The violin adds bird song and the gently swaying branches to the setting. In *The Critic* is a setting of an anonymous verse. Having found faults in each the flowers in the garden, our critic is in for a shock.

The text of the *Magnificat* is from Saint Luke's Gospel. The Virgin Mary is visiting her cousin Elizabeth, who is pregnant with John the Baptist. Elizabeth praises Mary for her faith and Mary sings this canticle in response.

Three Songs for Graham were written for baritone, Graham Trew and are settings of poems by Marian Lines, who collaborated with Roe on numerous operas, musicals and other vocal works. The songs range from dreaming of the perfect, circular house perched on a hill, through a gardener with good intentions but little resolve, to a surprise encounter with a scooter.

I know a bank is a setting of Oberon's instructions to Puck from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The song is dedicated to the memory of soprano, Tracey Chadwell who died shortly before the recording sessions for the CD *The Music Tree*.

The subject of *Diva's Lament*, bemoaning the lack of age-appropriate roles for mature sopranos, was suggested to the lyricist, Jacqueline Froom, by song's dedicatee, Carol Caplan. Inspired by the lyric and composed in 1995, the 300th anniversary of Purcell's death, Roe includes a musical homage to Dido's lament.

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Betty Roe's website is at **www.bettyroe.com** and you may find interesting an article on the composer by Iain Sneddon written for her 80th birthday in 2011 and which can be found online at **http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2011/Jan11/betty_roe.htm**

The performers

Sarah Leonard is one of Britain's most respected and versatile sopranos. She has a wide repertoire from baroque to contemporary, encompassing opera, and concert work and has appeared throughout the world in major concert halls, opera houses and festivals. Her 30-plus recordings include a recital series of English Song with Malcolm Martineau, works by Varèse with Chailly and the Concertgebouw Orchestra and Ligeti's *Aventures*, *Nouvelle Aventures* with the Schoenberg Ensemble. Her most recent release featured works by Nicola Lefanu and David Lumsdaine with Gemini Ensemble for Metier Records (MSV 28565)

Sarah has a special love of English Song and as Chairman of the Association of English Singers and Speakers continues to promote this wonderful repertoire.

Sarah gives regular song recitals with both Nigel Foster and Stephen Gutman and runs popular singing courses at Benslow Music in Hitchin and Jackdaws in Somerset.

In January 2013 Hull University awarded Sarah Leonard a Degree of Doctor of Music, *honoris causa* for her services to music. www.sarahleonard.me

Anne Marie Sheridan obtained her Bachelors of Music Performance from the Conservatory of Music Dublin where she received the Paul McNamara gold medal for excellence in performance. She graduated with an MA in advanced vocal studies from the Wales International Academy of Voice and continues her vocal tuition with Paul Farrington and Marie McLaughlin.

Opera roles include Angelica (*Suor Angelica*), First Mother (*Dead Man Walking*), Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*), Mimi (*La Bohème*) and Violetta (*La Traviata*). As a concert soloist, her repertoire includes *Dvořák Requiem*, *Rossini Stabat Mater*, *Verdi Requiem*, *Strauss Vier Letzte Lieder*, *Wagner Wesendonck Lieder* and *Mahler Rückert Lieder*.

She was a prize winner at the Ballymena Feis Ceoil and the Dublin Feis Ceoil and reached the semi-final of the inaugural Elizabeth Connell Prize for Dramatic Sopranos.
www.annemariesheridan.com

Robin Tritschler, a rising star of the lieder world, is celebrated for his artistic programming and radiantly lyrical voice. He has won many prizes, including the Wigmore Hall Song Competition, and was selected as a BBC New Generation Artist. Robin continues to perform extensively with the BBC in recital and on the concert platform. A versatile and accomplished artist, his repertoire spans Baroque to contemporary music. He has performed with leading conductors and orchestras including the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Yannick Nézet-Séguin, BBCSO with Sakari Oramo, BBCPO under Juanjo Mena, the Hallé Orchestra under Sir Mark Elder, the Hong Kong Philharmonic under Edo de Waart, Orchestre National de Lyon under Yutaka Sado, BBCNOW, the BR Rundfunk, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Gulbenkian Orchestra, the Orquesta Nacional de España, the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra, the National Philharmonic of Russia, and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. Robin's performances are often broadcast across Europe, and he has appeared with The Royal Opera (Covent Garden), Welsh National Opera, Angers Nantes Opera, Teatro Colón, and at the Ruhrtriennale. His discography includes Songs by Franz (Hyperion), No Exceptions No Exemptions, Great War Songs (Signum), and a Wigmore Hall Live recording of Schubert and Britten.

Stephen Varcoe is known around the world for his work in concerts and recordings. He has appeared with many leading orchestras in the UK, Europe, Japan and North America. Stephen is also known for his recitals of poetry and song in a wide range of themes and styles.

Stephen features as a soloist on about 150 CDs of works by the Baroque masters, by Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven, and by later British composers such as Britten, Osborne, Musgrave and Tavener. His song recordings include Fauré, Hahn and Schubert, as well as Grainger, Gurney, Stanford, Parry and Finzi. He completed a PhD at the University of York in 2009, and he teaches at the Royal College of Music, London. His book, *Sing English Song* is published by Thames Publishing. www.stephenvarcoe.co.uk

Madeleine Mitchell has been described by The Times as 'one of the UK's foremost violinists'. Her performances in some 50 countries as a soloist and chamber musician in a wide repertoire are frequently broadcast for television and radio including the BBC Proms, ABC, Bayerischer Rundfunk, S4C and Italian TV, with orchestras including BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Ulster, Royal Philharmonic, City of London Chamber, Czech Radio and St Petersburg Philharmonic. She's given many recitals in major venues including Lincoln Center New York, Wigmore, South Bank Centre and Barbican halls London, Vienna, Moscow, Victoria Hall Singapore, Seoul Centre for the Arts and Sydney Opera House. Mitchell's acclaimed discography for which she has been nominated for Grammy and BBC Music Awards, includes albums of works written for her by well known composers such as Sir James MacMillan and a popular collection, 'Violin Songs' for Divine Art (DDA 25063) "*a collection of small gems, wonderfully played*" - *The Strad*. www.madeleinemitchell.com

Emma Murphy has played and recorded with some of the UK's leading period groups, including *The King's Consort*, *Gabrieli Consort & Players* and *Ex Cathedra*, as well as with the BBC Singers and BBC Symphony Orchestra. Emma has also played with the CBSO, under the directorships of Emmanuelle Haim and Giovanni Antonini. She plays in numerous chamber groups, including the renaissance group, *Philomel*, and with the baroque trio, *Da Camera*. As well as early music, Emma has a keen interest in contemporary music and has taken part in the acclaimed Park Lane Group New Year Series at the Southbank, both as a soloist and in an ensemble. Emma has made a solo recording of 'The Division Flute' on the *Signum* Label, and her trio *Da Camera's* recording of Telemann's trio sonatas on *Chandos*.

Nigel Foster studied piano at the Royal Academy of Music and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, under Roger Vignoles, Graham Johnson and Iain Burnside. At both the Academy and the Guildhall he won every prize and award available for piano accompaniment and has since been appointed an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music and a Steinway artist.

Nigel enjoys a busy schedule performing on the concert platform. He has played for singers including Sarah Walker, Yvonne Kenny, Roderick Williams, Ailish Tynan, Elizabeth Watts, Ian Partridge. He has performed at most major UK venues and has given concerts all over Europe and in Asia, New Zealand and the Americas. He has broadcast on BBC Radio 3, Classic FM and on French and Welsh television.

Nigel is the founder and director of the London Song Festival, an annual series of concerts and master-classes which also acts as an important platform for young singers at the beginning of their careers. www.londonsongfestival.org

Nigel has worked with conductors including Sir John Eliot Gardiner, playing for singers including Renee Fleming, Angela Gheorghiu and Roberto Alagna. Nigel's CD recordings include collections of English Song with Stephen Varcoe and anthologies of song of Alun Hoddinott and Mansel Thomas with Jeremy Huw Williams for the Sain and Diversions/Dunelm labels. He features on the soundtrack for the French film *L'Homme est une Femme Comme les Autres*.

Daniel Beer began learning the horn at the age of 10 with his father, trombonist Paul Beer. In 2000 he was accepted with a full scholarship to the Purcell School of Music and in 2005 began studying at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Whilst there, Dan performed solo and chamber recitals at the Wigmore Hall and a concerto with the London Soloists Chamber Orchestra. Since leaving Guildhall, Dan has enjoyed a busy freelance career playing in orchestras including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, is a regular guest principal of the Malaysia Philharmonic and has performed with the RTE Symphony Orchestras and the BBC Ulster Orchestra. Since 2015 Dan has been the 2nd Horn with the Scottish Ballet orchestra. Dan is a frequent player on the London's West End musical scene, playing in shows including *The Lion King*, *Les Misérables*, *Miss Saigon* and *Billy Elliot* to name a few. He has also featured on numerous sessions for film and television.



Betty Roe

Sarah Leonard



Anne Marie Sheridan

Robin Tritschler



Stephen Varcoe



Daniel Beer



Emma Murphy



Madeleine Mitchell

Nigel Foster



The poems

1. I Know a Bank

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine:

There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight;
And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in:

William Shakespeare (1564 - 1616) from
A Midsummer Night's Dream, Act 2, Scene 1

2. In a Garden

Baby, see the flowers!

—Baby sees

Fairer things than these,

Fairer though they be than dreams of ours.

Baby, hear the birds!

—Baby knows

Better songs than those,

Sweeter though they sound than sweetest
words.

Baby, see the moon!

—Baby's eyes

Laugh to watch it rise,

Answering light with love and night with noon.

Baby, hear the sea!

—Baby's face

Takes a graver grace,

Touched with wonder what the sound may be.

Baby, see the star!

—Baby's hand

Opens, warm and bland,

Calm in claim of all things fair that are.

Baby, hear the bells!

—Baby's head Bows,

as ripe for bed,

Now the flowers curl round and close their cells.

Baby, flower of light,

Sleep, and see

Brighter dreams than we,

Till good day shall smile away good night.

Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837 – 1909)

Two Garden Songs

3. In This Lone, Open Glade

In this lone, open glade I lie,

Screen'd by deep boughs on either hand;

And at its end, to stay the eye,

Those black-crown'd, red-boled pine-trees stand!

Birds here make song, each bird has his,

Across the girdling city's hum.

How green under the boughs it is!

How thick the tremulous sheep-cries come!

Here at my feet what wonders pass,

What endless, active life is here!

What blowing daisies, fragrant grass!

An air-stirr'd forest, fresh and clear.

I, on men's impious uproar hurl'd,

Think often, as I hear them rave,

That peace has left the upper world

And now keeps only in the grave.

Yet here is peace for ever new!

When I who watch them am away,

Still all things in this glade go through

The changes of their quiet day.

Then to their happy rest they pass!
The flowers upclose, the birds are fed,
The night comes down upon the grass,
The child sleeps warmly in his bed.

Calm soul of all things! make it mine
To feel, amid the city's jar,
That there abides a peace of thine,
Man did not make, and cannot mar.

Calm, calm me more! nor let me die
Before I have begun to live.

Matthew Arnold (1822 – 1888) from
Lines Written in Kensington Gardens

4. The Critic

A little seed lay on the ground
And soon began to sprout.
"Now, which of all the flowers around,"
It mused, "shall I come out?"

The lily's face is fair and proud,
But just a trifle cold.
The rose, I think, is rather loud,
And then, its fashions old.

The violet is all very well,
But not a flower I'd choose;
Nor yet the Canterbury bell —
I never cared for blues."

And so it criticized each flower,
This supercilious seed,
Until it woke one summer morn,
And found itself — a weed.

Anonymous

5. Magnificat

My soul doth magnify the Lord.
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
For he hath regarded the lowliness of his
handmaiden.
For behold, from henceforth all generations shall
call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath magnified me
And holy is his Name.
And his mercy is on them that fear him
throughout all generations.
He hath shewed strength with his arm,
He hath scattered the proud in the imagination
of their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seat
And hath exalted the humble and meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things
And the rich he hath sent empty away.
He remembering his mercy hath holpen his
servant Israel
As he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and
his seed for ever.
Amen.

Book of Common Prayer

6. The Silver Hound

Prologue
Memory is my silver hound
Stalking days that time has hidden
Searching for a past that's lost
In shadows grown as thick as grass.
Give him courage, let him pass
Find the secret and forbidden,
Open graves and free each ghost.
Let my seven selves be found,
Quarry for my silver hound.

Lullaby

I was a cradled child
Who woke to see the stars
I thought that I could touch the sky
Beyond the window bars.
I heard the song of rain,
I laughed with morning light
I smelled the budding leaves of spring,
And knew that sleep was night.
The bough was rocked by wind,
The tree top cradle fell.
I knew the cold of sudden fear
But had no words to tell.

The Schoolboy

When learning came, tall as a giant,
Talking of centuries, showing me measure,
Weight and volume teaching me dimension,
Bringing me languages, laying before me
All of man's achievement.
I was amazed by all these opened doors,
Enchanted by the music and the stories.
But, being young, I often turned away,
Calling my friends to come with me to play.

The Soldier

Look in the mirror soldier, soldier,
What do you see?
My share of pride, of courage, of duty, of victory.

Look at the prisoners, soldier, soldier,
What do you see?
My own reflection, my wounds, my hunger, my
misery.

Look at the shrouded, soldier, soldier,
What do you see?
My shadow, my brother, my youth, my loss, all
history.

The Lover

My love has no measure, but the words of other
lovers,
Yet my hope is boundless, garlanded and certain.
I give my promise I give my truth,
I commit my years to you with joy.
I ask nothing - I ask everything.
Do you understand this,
Beauty, as I speak to you in the words of other
lovers?

The Statesman

I have served, so now I may command,
I have listened, now is the time to speak,
I have endured, now I offer justice.
Rich, let me remember poverty.
Fortunate, let me become wise.
Steel should not forget the pains of fire to which
it owes its strength.

The Old Man

I am my own ghost now,
Dreams are my company,
Saplings I set are forest trees.
Love is an echo, hope is a shadow.
I sit with a rug across my knees
While small birds feed on my window ledge.

Epitaph

What was your quarry, silver hound?
The dead man's name means little here
What did you find, ranging through time,
His joy? his power? his youth, his fear?
Did seven souls make one man whole?

Ursula Vaughan Williams (1911 - 2007)

7. The Fair Singer

To make a final conquest of all me,
Love did compose so sweet an enemy,
In whom both beauties to my death agree,
Joining themselves in fatal harmony;
That while she with her eyes my heart does bind,
She with her voice might captivate my mind.

I could have fled from one but singly fair,
My disentangled soul itself might save,
Breaking the curled trammels of her hair.
But how should I avoid to be her slave,
Whose subtle art invisibly can wreath
My fetters of the very air I breathe?

It had been easy fighting in some plain,
Where victory might hang in equal choice,
But all resistance against her is vain,
Who has th'advantage both of eyes and voice,
And all my forces needs must be undone,
She having gained both the wind and sun.

Andrew Marvell (1621 – 1678)

Three Songs for Graham

8. The Dream House

It came as a dream -
A house on a green hill,
Round like a tower,
Round like a windmill.
He woke in the night,
Woke in the night chill;
Knew he must live in
A house like a windmill.

So he builded his house
High on a green hill,
It was round like a tower,
Round like a windmill;

And his friends came up,
Up to the green hill,
To the house like a tower,
That was round like a windmill.

Then the wine went round
And they drank their fill,
And the talk went round and round
Like the sails of a windmill.

Though the years have gone round,
Yet he lives there still,
In the round house,
Like a round tower
High on the green, green hill.

9. The Promising Gardener

Tomorrow I shall dig the left-hand bed...
And hoe the weeds
And prune the apricot -
Unless I lop that rotten branch instead,
Or move the rose beside the bergamot
Yes - I'll see to that tomorrow.

Of course, we'll have to hope the weather's fine,
There's not much point
In digging in the rain...
And if I don't cut down the Russian Vine,
I'll have to nail the trellis up again.
Mmm - I'll work that out tomorrow.

From here, inside, the daffodils look good...
And hyacinths,
Crocus and snowdrops too.
I ought to get out there,
I really should,
Now Spring is sprung there's such a lot to do.
Right - all set for tomorrow!

Let's see what Ceefax says about the weather...
Ooh... 'Gale Force winds ...
The forecast, 'wet and bleak'!
Well, that's put paid to gardening altogether,
I'll have to put it off until next week.
Still - it's a shame about tomorrow;
I was looking forward to a little gardening.

10. Scooting

I was standing at the bus-stop
Thinking, 'surely *something* must stop,
Can they *all* be making for the terminus?'
When I heard a little voice
Piping, 'well, you've got a choice;
You'd be better off employing one of us.'

I looked round in blank amazement,
When I noticed on the pavement
Where a little scooter leant against the wall.
So I dashed into a store,
Selling scooters by the score,
And bought the most expensive one of all.

Now I go scoot, scoot, scoot on my scooter,
Through city streets and up the mountainside;
And no one would dispute
That there's anything as cute
As seeing me scoot-scooting in my pride.

'Twas a life-transforming moment
By that bus-stop on the pavement;
I've escaped the queues and cars I can't abide.
No more honking, no more hooting,
No more hairy red-light-shooting,
Life is on a different footing,
I'm the Emperor of scooting...
With my trusty little scooter by my side!

Marian Lines (1933-2012)

11. Diva's Lament

I'm a Mimi who's over the hill.
My Butterfly's faded,
My Gilda is jaded,
Pamina? She's been through the mill.

Please write a new part:
Say a fading old tart
Or a grandmother past eighty-two
With top Cs galore
And trills by the score
Just to show what this diva can do.

My voice is as sound as a bell.
I may look like a hag
And my body may sag
But my coloratura's quite well.

My Norma will never grow old.
My Tosca's still nifty
Although pushing fifty
But I'm long past my shelf date I'm told.

Salome must be a young thing
With seven veils flowing
Her naughty bits showing
Who cares if the poor girl can sing?

Now its curtain up on a different scene:
For I'm fighting back
on a very diff'rent tack
No need for the stage or the screen!

Don't pity this singer
Who's gone through the wringer.
I've just made my first CD.
And no one can see
That the youthful Mimi is nearly an OAP*.
**Old age pensioner.*

Jacqueline Froom (b.1929)

Three Hardy Conversations

12. A Wife Waits

Will's at the dance in the Club-room below,
Where the tall liquor-cups foam;
I on the pavement up here by the Bow,
Wait, wait, to steady him home.

Will and his partner are treading a tune,
Loving companions they be;
Willy, before we were married in June,
Said he loved no one but me;

Said he would let his old pleasures all go
Ever to live with his Dear.
Will's at the dance in the Club-room below,
Shivering I wait for him here.

13. Farmer Dunman's Funeral

"Bury me on a Sunday"

He said, "so as to see
Poor folk there; 'tis their one day
To spare for burying me."

With forethought of that Sunday
He wrote while he was well,
"On ten rum bottles one day
Drink for my funeral."

They buried him on a Sunday
So folk might not be balked
His wish, as 'twas their one day,
And forty couples walked.

They said to have it Sunday
Was always his concern,
His meaning being that one day
He'd do us a good turn.

We must, had it been Monday,
Have got it over soon.
But now we gain, being Sunday,
A jolly afternoon.

14. The Orphaned Old Maid

I wanted to marry, but father said, "No -
'Tis weakness in women to give themselves so;
If you care for your freedom you'll listen to me,
Make a spouse in your pocket, and let the men
be."

I spake on't again and again: father cried,
"Why--if you go husbanding, where shall I bide?
For never a home's for me elsewhere than here!"
And I yielded; for father had ever been dear.

But now father's gone, and I feel growing old,
And I'm lonely and poor in this house on the
wold,
And my sweetheart that was found a partner
elsewhere,
And nobody flings me a thought or a care.

Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928)

15. The Life that I have

The life that I have
Is all that I have
And the life that I have
Is yours.

The love that I have
Of the life that I have
Is yours and yours and yours.

A sleep I shall have
A rest I shall have
Yet death will be but a pause

For the peace of my years
In the long green grass
Will be yours and yours and yours.

Leo Marks (1920 – 2001)

16. Autumn's Legacy

Yellow ochre, russet, red,
The leaves are blowing in the wind;
Low sun strikes through iron clouds,
Lights fallen colours
A glowing carpet of burnished gold.
The wind that keeps a steady bluster
Sends great leaf-showers tumbling down;
Now the crumbling fallen colour
Erases the memory of emerald.

Remembering six months ago
The blossom carpet purple there
Now the russet blanket thickens,
Children shushing, leaves are dying,
All the winters past remind us
Spring's promise of renewal is true
Though expecting snow and ruin
In short months the blossom bursting will
proclaim renew.

Here the trees all lit by colour
Maintain the cycle of rebirth
But grey headed witnesses
Fear age is age, they'll not endure.

The golden autumn quickly fades
Bare branches frame the winter sky,
Long wait for sap and Easter whiteness
Springtime's blizzard blowing down,
Bright fresh green signs spring arriving
But will the aged watcher greet it
This time, next time, all too near.

Lewis Foreman (b.1941)

Three Celtic Songs

17. A Cradle Song

O men from the fields,
Come gently within,
Tread softly, softly,
O men, coming in.

Mavourneen is going
From me and from you
Where Mary will fold him
With mantle of blue!

From reek of the smoke
And cold of the floor
And peering of things
Across the half-door.

O men from the fields,
Softly, softly come through;
Mary puts round him
Her mantle of blue.

Padraic Colum (1881 - 1972)

18. A Boy's Song

Where the pools are bright and deep,
Where the grey trout lies asleep,
Up the river and over the lea,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the blackbird sings the latest,
Where the hawthorn blooms the sweetest,
Where the nestlings chirp and flee,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the mowers mow the cleanest,
Where the hay lies thick and greenest,
There to track the homeward bee,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the hazel bank is steepest,
Where the shadow falls the deepest,
Where the clustering nuts fall free,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Why the boys should drive away
Little sweet maidens from the play,
Or love to banter and fight so well,
That's the thing I never could tell.

But this I know, I love to play
Through the meadow, among the hay;
Up the water and over the lea,
That's the way for Billy and me.

James Hogg (1770 –1835)

19. The Fiddler of Dooney

When I play on my fiddle in Dooney,
Folk dance like a wave of the sea;
My cousin is priest in Kilvarnet,
My brother in Mocharabuiee.

I passed my brother and cousin:
They read in their books of prayer;
I read in my book of songs
I bought at the Sligo fair.

When we come at the end of time
To Peter sitting in state,
He will smile on the three old spirits,
But call me first through the gate;

For the good are always the merry,
Save by an evil chance,
And the merry love the fiddle,
And the merry love to dance:

And when the folk there spy me,
They will all come up to me,
With "Here is the fiddler of Dooney!"
And dance like a wave of the sea.

W. B. Yeats (1865 – 1939)

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