

The Errant Apprentice

Andy M. Stewart

When I was a young apprentice
and less than compos mentis
I took leave of all my senses
with a maid I fell in love.
Her ringlets so entwined me
Aphrodite's smile did blind me
Cupid's arrow struck behind me
and her father owned a pub.
It was there I met my nemesis
in her father's licensed premises
Like the Seraphim of Genesis
sat Mary Anne Maguire.
Arrayed in fine apparel
astride a porter barrel
She looked the kind of girl that
would fill you with desire.

All the turtle doves were cooing
as I took to my wooing
Her Loveliness pursuing
in the springtime of that year.
But she thought I should be older
and more gallant and much bolder
In the uniform of a soldier
'tis then she'd hold me dear.
In extremis and euphoria
I joined with Queen Victoria
For a spell of death or gloria
a-fighting with the Boers.
To the wind I threw all caution
I'll return with fame and fortune
And together make a portion
of matrimony's chores.

On the gravestone of her mother
she swore she loved no other
But I was to soon discover
that she played me for a berk.
For lady-luck had beached me
and intelligence had reached me
Whilst I'd been overseas she
had married to a Turk.
Well me, I then deserted
for to find the girl who'd flirted
Back to Ireland I reverted
for my jealousy was roused.
In Maguire's Pub in Derry
I found him making merry
With his arms around my Mary
as together they caroused.

So I took my time and waited
until his thirst was sated
And home he navigated
through the streets of Derry town.
At his lodgings he stood knocking
and whilst they were unlocking

I put a stone into a stocking
on his head I brought it down.
'Twas then the night's serenity
was rent with loud obscenity
And Ottoman profanity
that I couldn't understand.
With an oath he made to grab me
with full intent to stab me
But as he tried to kebab me
I was screaming up the strand.

All around the town's perimeter
he chased me with his scimitar
A powerful passion limiter
to an errant in his pride.
Through the waterside he chased me
to the Bridge of Foyle he raced me
And at Derry Quay he faced me
so I jumped into the tide.
Sure bravery's no virtue
when some heathen's trying to hurt you
And all noble thoughts desert you
when you see his curly knife.
For there's many things worth trying for
and occasionally worth lying for
But there's bugger-all worth dying for
so I'll stick to the soldier's life.