Widow's Curse

Bellowhead

In London dwelt a merchant man who left unto his son
A thousand pounds in land each year to spend when he was gone
No sooner was his father dead and buried in his grave
Than this his wild and wanton son his mind to lewdness gave

Within the seas of fleshly love, his heart was drowned so deep
At night he could not quietly without strange women sleep

So he kept women secretly to feed his heart's desire
And he dressed them all as gallant boys in pages' trim attire
But then one day upon the round he spied a lovely dame
Who was the widow's daughter dear of good report and fame

He beauty like the purple rose so glittered in his eye
That ravished by the same he sought her secret company

Then like a lustful lecher he found such convenient time
That he enforced her to drink 'till she was drunk with wine
And being over-charged with wine, a maiden's head is weak
He ravished her and when that she no reluctance make

And mark I pray what then befell unto this modest dame
When she recovered her lost sense and found of her defame

He womb began to swell; in time the babe received life
Though she was neither widow nor dame nor yet a married wife
Said she: "The babe within my womb shall never yet be born.
Not called a bastard by such wives that hold my fate in scorn"

"For I a strumpet in disgrace though one against my will
Before that I would shame my friends my own life's blood I'll spill
And as with wine I was deceived and made a victicious dame
So I will wash away with wine my scarlet spots of shame"

Then drinking down hot burning wine she yielded up her breath
By which the same the unborn babe was scalded unto death

Upon her knees her her mother fell; to heaven did cry and call
"If ever widow's curse," quoth she, "on mortal man did fall,
Then say amen to mine, oh Lord, that he may never thrive
Who was the cause of this sad fate but not rot away alive"

His nails from out his fingers fell his eyes from out his head
His toes they rotted from his feet before that he was dead
His tongue that had false sworn so oft to compass his desire
Within his mouth did swell and burn like coals of sparking fire
And thus in torment for his sins the wicked villain died
Whose hateful carcass after death could not in earth abide

But in the maws of carrion crows the ravens made their tomb
And then in hell he screamed and writhed in everlasting doom!

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