

La Belle Dame Sans Merci

Marianne Faithfull

Oh what can ail thee, knight-at-arms
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has withered from the lake
And no birds sing

Oh what can ail thee, knight-at-arms
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full
And the harvest's done

I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever-dew
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too

I met a lady in the meads
Full beautiful - a faery's child
Her hair was long, her foot was light
And her eyes were wild

I made a garland for her head
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone
She looked at me as she did love
And made sweet moan

I set her on my pacing steed
And nothing else saw all day long
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song

She found me roots of relish sweet
And honey wild, and manna-dew
And sure in language strange she said
'I love thee true'

She took me to her elfin grot
And there she wept and sighed full sore
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes
With kisses four

And there she lulled me asleep
And there I dreamed - Ah, woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dreamt
On the cold hill side

I saw pale kings and princes too
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all
They cried - 'La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!'

I saw their starved lips in the gloam
With horrid warning gaped wide
And I awoke and found me here
On the cold hill's side

And that is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering

Though sedge is withered from the lake
And no birds sing