

Mackerel of the Sea

Steeleye Span

When I was seven year old
My dear mother did die
My father married the worst woman
The world did ever see

She turned me to a loathsome worm
To lie at the foot of the tree
My sister Maisery she made
The mackerel of the sea

This father stood on the shore
And hearing sore complaint
And wondered at the laily moan
And questioned what it meant

Sing on your song you laily worm
That you now sing to me
For my two children have been gone
This many year from me

Every Saturday at noon
The mackerel comes to me
Changed back to my sister
The Lady Maisery

And she takes my laily head
And lays it on her knee
And combs it with a silver comb
To wash it in the sea
Seven knights I have slain
As I lay at the foot of the tree
And if you weren't my own father
The eighth one you would be

For it was your own wife
Tied me to the foot of the tree
And turned the lovely Maisery
To the mackerel of the sea

The father sent for his own wife
As fast as send could he
Where is the son you sent from me
And my daughter Maisery?

Why cry out so loudly
And try to worry me?
Your son is at our king's court

Serving for meat and fee

And your daughter at our queen's court
Learning courtesy
You lie, you lie, you ill woman
So loud I hear you lie

My son is the loathsome worm
That lies at the foot of the tree

And my daughter Maisery
She is the mackerel of the sea
Every Saturday at noon
The mackerel comes to me
Changed back to my sister
The Lady Maisery

And she takes my laily head
And lays it on her knee
And combs it with a silver comb
To wash it in the sea

She has taken a silver wand
And gave him strokes three
The worm became the bravest knight
That ever your eyes did see

She has taken a golden horn
Loud and shrill she blew
And all the fish soon swam to her
But not the mackrel of the sea

You shaped me once an unseemly shape
You'll never more shape me
And away she swam from that cold shore
And was lost forever

Every Saturday at noon
The mackerel comes to me
Changed back to my sister
The Lady Maisery
And she takes my laily head
And lays it on her knee
And combs it with a silver comb
To wash it in the sea