

Old Matron

Steeleye Span

My love she is a gentlewoman
Has her living by the seam
I know how she has provided
This night for me and my foot-groom

He is gone to Annie's door
Gently tirtled at the pin
You sleep, you wake, my true love Annie?
Rise up and let your love in

My love Annie, my dear Annie
I would be at your desire
But what about the old matron
As she sits by the fire?

William, keep your heart, she said
Keep up your heart and do not fear
It's seven years or even more
Since her feet did touch the floor

They had not kissed nor sworn devotion
As lovers when they meet
When up rose the old matron
And well she's spread her feet

O woe be for the old matron
So clever she has jumped the gate
And she's gone over the long, long hill
Knocked at the sheriff's gate
You sleep, you wake, my Lord? she said
Are you at your bower within?
There's a man lies with your daughter
I fear she has gone wrong

He had his horse with corn well foddered
His men all armed in mail
He gave the matron half a mile
To show them o'er the hill

William slept, but Annie wakened

When she heard their bridles ring
She tapped on her true lover's shoulder
And said You've slept too long

O save me, save me, blessed lady
Till I've got on my shooting gear
I do not fear the sheriff himself
Though all his men were here

Then they shot in and William out
The arrow grazed his bow
The maid she wept and tore her hair
Says, This can never do

They shot in and he shot out
The bow burnt Williams's hand

But then he kissed her ruby lips
And Says, My dear, we will stand
He set his horn to his mouth
And has blown both loud and shrill
And he has called his brother John
In the woods where he lay still

The first shot that John shot
He wounded fifty and fifteen
The next shot that he did let fly
He put out the sheriff's eye

O some of you lend him an arm
Says William to the sheriff's men
And you that came for strife this day
Take horse and ride fast home

But woe be to you old matron
An ill death may you see
I'll burn you on yon high hill-head
Blow your ashes in the sea