

Classic Poetry Series

William Barnes
- poems -

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William Barnes(1801-1886)

William Barnes was born at Blackmoor Vale in Dorset, the son of a farmer. He took a Bachelor of Divinity degree on a part-time basis at St. John's College, Cambridge, and became a clergyman in 1848. The poems he wrote about his birthplace on themes such as love, natural landscape and regional life brought him a lot of public acclaim. But he also had many other interests, especially languages. Apart from the classical languages, he also learned Welsh, Hindustani, Persian, Hebrew and a handful of European languages. His great interest in different kinds of knowledge made him write on different subjects such as mathematics, astronomy and geography. His real talent, however, lay in exploiting his poetic gift in the writing of folklore, thus setting the stage for people like Thomas Hardy.

Blackwore Maidens

THE PRIMRWOSE in the shade do blow,
The cowslip in the zun,
The thyme upon the down do grow,
The clote where streams do run;
An' where do pretty maidens grow
An' blow, but where the tow'r
Do rise among the bricken tuns,
In Blackwore by the Stour.

If you could zee their comely gait,
An' pretty faces' smiles,
A-trippen on so light o' waight,
An' steppen off the stiles;
A-gwain to church, as bells do swing
An' ring 'ithin the tow'r,
You'd own the pretty maidens' place
Is Blackwore by the Stour.

If you vrom Wimborne took your road,
To Stower or Paladore,
An' all the farmers' housen show'd
Their daughters at the door;
You'd cry to bachelors at hwome—
"Here, come: 'ithin an hour
You 'll vind ten maidens to your mind,
In Blackwore by the Stour."

An' if you look'd 'ithin their door,
To zee em in their place,
A-doen housework up avore
Their smilen mother's face;
You'd cry—"Why, if a man would wive
An' thrive, 'ithout a dow'r,
Then let en look en out a wife
In Blackwore by the Stour."

As I upon my road did pass
A school-house back in May,
There out upon the beäten grass

Wer maidens at their play
An' as the pretty souls did tveil
An' smile, I cried, "The flow'r
O' beauty, then, is still in bud
In Blackmore by the Stour."

William Barnes

Easter Zunday

Last Easter Jim put on his blue
Frock cwoat, the vu'st time-vier new;
Wi' yollow buttons all o' brass,
That glitter'd in the zun lik' glass;
An' pok'd 'ithin the button-hole
A tutty he'd a-begg'd or stole.
A span-new wes-co't, too, he wore,
Wi' yellow stripes all down avore;
An' tied his breeches' lags below
The knee, wi' ribbon in a bow;
An' drow'd his kitty-boots azide,
An' put his laggens on, an' tied
His shoes wi' strings two vingers wide,
Because 'twere Easter Zunday.

An' after mornen church wer out
He come back hwome, an' stroll'd about
All down the vields, an' drough the leane,
Wi' sister Kit an' cousin Jeane,
A-turnen proudly to their view
His yollow breast an' back o' blue.
The lambs did play, the grounds wer green,
The trees did bud, the zun did sheen;
The lark did zing below the sky,
An' roads wer all a-blown so dry,
As if the zummer wer begun;
An' he had sich a bit o' fun!
He meade the maidens squeal an' run,
Because 'twere Easter Zunday.

William Barnes

Evenén In The Village

Now the light o' the west is a-turn'd to gloom,
An' the men be at hwome vrom ground;
An' the bells be a-zendén all down the Coombe
From tower, their mwoansome sound.
An' the wind is still,
An' the house-dogs do bark,
An' the rooks be a-vled to the elems high an' dark,
An' the water do roar at mill.

An' the flickerén light drough the window-peäne
Vrom the candle's dull fleäme do shoot,
An' young Jemmy the smith is a-gone down leäne,
A-playén his shrill-vaiced flute.
An' the miller's man,
Do zit down at his ease
On the seat that is under the cluster o' trees,
Wi' his pipe an' his cider can.

William Barnes

Hay-Carren

'Tis merry ov a zummer's day,
When vo'k be out a-haulèn hay,
Where boughs, a-spread upon the ground,
Do meäke the staddle big an' round;
An' grass do stand in pook, or lie
In long-backed weäles or parsels, dry.
There I do vind it stir my heart
To hear the frothèn hosses snort,
A-haulèn on, wi' sleek heäir'd hides,
The red-wheel'd waggon's deep-blue zides.
Aye; let me have woone cup o' drink,
An' hear the linky harness clink,
An' then my blood do run so warm,
An' put sich strangth 'ithin my eärm,
That I do long to toss a pick,
A-pitchèn or a-meäkèn rick.

The bwoy is at the hosse's head,
An' up upon the waggon bed
The lwoaders, strong o' eärm do stan',
At head, an' back at tail, a man,
Wi' skill to build the lwoad upright
An' bind the vwolded corners tight;
An' at each zide o'm, sprack an' strong,
A pitcher wi' his long-stem'd prong,
Avore the best two women now
A-call'd to reäky after plough.

When I do pitchy, 'tis my pride
Vor Jenny Hine to reäke my zide,
An' zee her fling her reäke, an' reach
So vur, an' teäke in sich a streech;
An' I don't shatter hay, an' meäke
Mwore work than needs vor Jenny's reäke.
I'd sooner zee the weäles' high rows
Lik' hedges up above my nose,
Than have light work myzelf, an' vind
Poor Jeäne a-beät an' left behind;
Vor she would sooner drop down dead,

Than let the pitchers get a-head.

'Tis merry at the rick to zee
How picks do wag, an' hay do vlee.
While woone's unlwoadèn, woone do teäke
The pitches in; an' zome do meäke
The lofty rick upright an' roun',
An' tread en hard, an' reäke en down,
An' tip en, when the zun do zet,
To shoot a sudden vall o' wet.
An' zoo 'tis merry any day
Where vo'k be out a-carrèn hay.

William Barnes

Hay-Meaken. Nunchen Time

A.

Back here, but now, the jobber John
Come by, an' cried, 'Well done, zing on,
I thought as I come down the hill,
An' heärd your zongs a-ringèn sh'ill,
Who woudden like to come, an' fling
A peäir o' prongs where you did zing?'

J.

Aye, aye, he woudden vind it playä,
To work all day a-meäkèn hay,
Or pitchèn o't, to eärms a-spread
By lwoaders, yards above his head,
'T'ud meäke en wipe his drippèn brow.

A.

Or else a-reäkèn a'ter plow.

J.

Or workèn, wi' his nimble pick,
A-stiffled wi' the hay, at rick.

A.

Our Company would suit en best,
When we do teäke our bit o' rest,
At nunch, a-gather'd here below
The sheäde theäse wide-bough'd woak do drow,
Where hissèn froth mid rise, an' float
In horns o' eäle, to wet his droat.

J.

Aye, if his swellèn han' could drag
A meat-slice vrom his dinner bag.
'T'ud meäke the busy little chap
Look rather glum, to zee his lap
Wi' all his meal ov woone dry crowst,
An' vinny cheese so dry as dowst.

A.

Well, I dont grumble at my food,
'Tis wholesome, John, an' zoo 'tis good.

J.

Whose reäke is that a-lyèn there?
Do look a bit the woo'se vor wear.

A.

Oh! I mus' get the man to meäke
A tooth or two vor thik wold reäke,
'Tis leäbor lost to strike a stroke
Wi' him, wi' ha'f his teeth a-broke.

J.

I should ha' thought your han' too fine
To break your reäke, if I broke mine.

A.

The ramsclaws thin'd his wooden gum
O' two teeth here, an' here were zome
That broke off when I reäk'd a patch
O' groun' wi' Jimmy, vor a match:
An' here's a gap where woone or two
Wer broke by Simon's clumsy shoe,
An' when I gi'ed his poll a poke,
Vor better luck, another broke.
In what a veag have you a-swung
Your pick, though, John? His stem's a-sprung.

J.

When I an' Simon had a het
O' pookèn, yonder, vor a bet,
The prongs o'n gi'd a tump a poke,
An' then I vound the stem o'n broke,
But they do meäke the stems o' picks
O' stuff so brittle as a kicks.

A.

There's poor wold Jeäne, wi' wrinkled skin,
A-tellèn, wi' her peakèd chin,
Zome teäle ov her young days, poor soul.
Do meäke the young-woones smile. 'Tis droll.
What is it? Stop, an' let's goo near.
I do like theäse wold teäles. Let's hear.

William Barnes

My Fore-Elders

When from the child, that still is led
By hand, a father's hand is gone, ---
Or when a few-year'd mother dead
Has left her children growing on, ---
When men have left their children staid,
And they again have boy and maid, ---
O, can they know, as years may roll,
Their children's children, soul by soul?
If this with souls in heaven can be,
Do my fore-elders know of me?

My elders' elders, man and wife,
Were borne full early to the tomb,
With children still in childhood life
To play with butterfly or bloom.
And did they see the seasons mould
Their faces on, from young to old,
As years might bring them, turn by turn,
A time to laugh or time to mourn?
If this with souls in heaven can be,
Do my fore-elders know of me?

How fain I now would walk the floor
Within their mossy porch's bow,
Or linger by their church's door,
Or road that bore them to and fro,
Or nook where once they build their mow,
Or gateway open to their plough
(Though now indeed no gate is swung
That their live hands had ever hung), ---
If I could know that they would see
Their child's late child, and know of me.

William Barnes

My Orcha'D In Linden Lea

'Ithin the woodlands, flow'ry gleaded,
By the woak tree's mossy moot,
The sheenen grass bleades, timber-sheaded,
Now do quiver under voot;
An' birds do whissle auver head,
An' water's bubblen in its bed,
An' ther vor me the apple tree
Do lean down low in Linden Lea.

When leaves that leately wer a-springen
Now do feade 'ithin the copse,
An' painted birds do hush ther zingen
Up upon the timber's tops;
An' brown-leav'd fruit's a-turnen red,
In cloudless zunsheen, auver head,
Wi' fruit vor me the apple tree
Do lean down low in Linden Lea.

Let other vo'k meake money vaster
In the air o' dark-room'd towns,
I don't dread a peevish measter;
Though noo man do heed my frowns,
I be free to goo abrode,
Or teake agean my hwomeward road
To where vor me the apple tree
Do lean down low in Linden Lea.

William Barnes

The Blackbird

Ov all the birds upon the wing
Between the zunny showers o' spring,-
Vor all the lark, a-swingen high,
Mid zing below a cloudless sky,
An' sparrows, clust'ren roun' the bough,
Mid chatter to the men at plough, -
The blackbird, whisslen in among
The boughs, do zing the gayest zong.

Vor we do hear the blackbird zing
His sweetest ditties in the spring,
When nippen win's noo mwore do blow
Vrom northern skies, wi' sleet or snow,
But dreve light doust along between
The leane-zide hedges, thick an' green;
An' zoo the blackbird in among
The boughs do zing the gayest zong.

'Tis blithe, wi' newly-opened eyes,
To zee the mornen's ruddy skies;
Or, out a-haulen frith or lops
Vrom new-pleshed hedge or new-velled copse,
To rest at noon in primrowse beds
Below the white-barked woak-trees' heads;
But there's noo time, the whole day long,
Lik' evenen wi' the blackbird's zong.

Vor when my work is all a-done
Avore the zetten o' the zun,
Then blushen Jeane do walk along
The hedge to meet me in the drong,
An' stay till all is dim an' dark
Besides the ashen tree's white bark;
An' all besides the blackbird's shrill
An' runnen evenen-whissle's still.

An' there in bwoyhood I did rove
Wi' pryen eyes along the drove
To vind the nest the blackbird meade

O' grass-stalks in the high bough's sheade;
Or climb aloft, wi' clingen knees,
Vor crows' aggs up in swayen trees,
While frightened blackbirds down below
Did chatter o' their little foe.
An' zoo there's noo pleace lik' the drong,
Where I do hear the blackbird's zong.

William Barnes

The Broken Heart

News o' grief had overtaken
Dark-eyed Fanny, now vorseaken;
There she zot, wi' breast a-heaven,
While vrom zide to zide, wi' grieven,
Vell her head, wi' tears a-creepen
Down her cheeks, in bitter weepen.
There wer still the ribbon-bow
She tied avore her hour ov woe,
An' there wer still the hans that tied it
Hangen white,
Or wringen tight,
In ceare that drowned all ceare bezide it.

When a man, wi' heartless slighten,
Mid become a maiden's blighten,
He mid cearelessly vorseake her,
But must answer to her Meaker;
He mid slight, wi' selfish blindness,
All her deeds o' loven-kindness,
God wull waigh 'em wi' the slighten
That mid be her love's requiten;
He do look on each deceiver,
He do know
What weight o' woe
Do break the heart ov ev'ry griever.

William Barnes

The Castle Ruins

A HAPPY day at Whitsuntide,
As soon 's the zun begun to vall,
We all stroll'd up the steep hill-zide
To Meldon, gret an' small;
Out where the Castle wall stood high
A-mwoldren to the zunny sky.

An' there wi' Jenny took a stroll
Her youngest sister, Poll, so gay,
Beside John Hind, ah! merry soul,
An' mid her wedlock fay;
An' at our zides did play an' run
My little maid an' smaller son.

Above the baten mwold upsprung
The driven doust, a-spreaden light,
An' on the new-leav'd thorn, a-hung,
Wer wool a-quiv'ren white;
An' corn, a-sheenen bright, did bow,
On slopen Meldon's zunny brow.

There, down the roofless wall did glow
The zun upon the grassy vloer,
An' weakly-wandren winds did blow,
Unhinder'd by a door;
An' smokeless now avore the zun
Did stan' the ivy-girded tun.

My bwoy did watch the daws' bright wings
A-flappen vrom their ivy bow'rs;
My wife did watch my maid's light springs,
Out here an' there vor flow'rs;
And John did zee noo tow'rs, the place
Vor him had only Polly's face.

An' there, of all that pried about
The walls, I overlook'd em best,
An' what o' that? Why, I made out
Noo mwore than all the rest:

That there wer woonce the nest of zome
That wer a-gone avore we come.

When woonce above the tun the smoke
Did wreathy blue among the trees,
An' down below, the liven vo'k
Did tweil as brisk as bees:
Or zit wi' weary knees, the while
The sky wer lightless to their tweil

William Barnes

The Child An' The Mowers

O AYE! they had woone child bezide,
An' a finer your eyes never met,
Twer a dear little fellow that died
In the summer that come wi' such het;
By the mowers, too thoughtless in fun,
He wer then a-zent off vrom our eyes,
Vrom the light ov the dew-dryen zun,-
Aye! vrom days under the blue-hollow'd skies.

He went out to the mowers in meade,
When the zun wer a-rose to his height,
An' the men wer a-swingen the snead,
Wi' their earms in white sleeves, left an' right;
An' out there, as they rested at noon,
O! they drench'd en vrom eale-horns too deep,
Till his thoughts wer a-drown'd in a swoon;
Aye! his life wer a-smother'd in sleep.

Then they laid en there-right on the ground,
On a grass-heap, a-zweltren wi'het,
Wi' his hair all a-wetted around
His young feace, wi' the big drops o' zweet;
In his little left palm he'd a-zet,
Wi' his right hand, his vore-finger's tip;
As vor zome-hat he woulden vorget,-
Aye! zome thought that he woulden let slip.

Then they took en in hwome to his bed,
An' he rose vrom his pillow noo mwore,
Vor the curls on his sleek little head
To be blown by the wind out o' door.
Vor he died while the hay russled grey
On the staddle so leately begun:
Lik' the mown grass a-dried by the day,-
Aye! the zwath-flow'r's a-killed by the zun.

William Barnes

The Geate A-Vallen To

In the zunsheen of our zummings
Wi' the hay time now a-come,
How busy wer we out a-vield
Wi' vew a-left at hwome,
When waggons rumbled out ov yard
Red wheeled, wi' body blue,
And back behind `em loudly slamm'd
The geate a'vallen to.

Drough daysheen ov how many years
The geate ha' now a-swung
Behind the veet o' vull-grown men
And vootsteps of the young.
Drough years o' days it swung to us
Behind each little shoe,
As we tripped lightly on avore
The geate a-vallen to.

In evenen time o' starry night
How mother zot at hwome,
And kept her bleazen vier bright
Till father should ha' come,
An' how she quicken'd up and smiled
An' stirred her vier anew,
To hear the trampen ho'ses' steps
An' geate a-vallen to.

There's moon-sheen now in nights o' fall
When leaves be brown vrom green,
When, to the slammen o' the geate,
Our Jenny's ears be keen,
When the wold dog do wag his tail,
An' Jean could tell to who,
As he do come in drough the geate,
The geate a-vallen to.

An' oft do come a saddened hour
When there must goo away
One well-beloved to our heart's core,

Vor long, perhaps vor aye:
An' oh! it is a touchen thing
The loven heart must rue,
To hear behind his last farewell
The geate a-vallen to.

William Barnes

The Girt Woak Tree That's In The Dell

The girt woak tree that's in the dell!
There's noo tree I do love so well;
Vor times an' times when I wer young,
I there've a-climbed, an' there've a-zwung,
An' picked the eacorns green, a-shed
In wrestlen storms vrom his broad head.
An' down below's the cloty brook
Where I did vish with line an' hook,
An' beat, in playsome dips and zwims,
The foamy stream, wi' white-skinned lim's.
An' there my mother nimbly shot
Her knitten-needles, as she zot
At evenen down below the wide
Woak's head, wi' father at her zide.
An' I've a-played wi' many a bwoy,
That's now a man an' gone away;
Zoo I do like noo tree so well
'S the girt woak tree that's in the dell.

An' there, in leater years, I roved
Wi' thik poor maid I fondly loved, -
The maid too feair to die so soon, -
When evenen twilight, or the moon,
Cast light enough 'ithin the pleace
To show the smiles upon her feace,
Wi' eyes so clear's the glassy pool,
An' lips an' cheeks so soft as wool.
There han' in han', wi' bosoms warm,
Wi' love that burned but thought noo harm,
Below the wide-boughed tree we passed
The happy hours that went too vast;
An' though she'll never be my wife,
She's still my leaden star o' life.
She's gone: an' she've a-left to me
Her mem'ry in the girt woak tree;
Zoo I do love noo tree so well
'S the girt woak tree that's in the dell.

An' oh! mid never ax nor hook

Be brought to spweil his steately look;
Nor ever roun' his ribby zides
Mid cattle rub ther heairy hides;
Nor pigs rout up his turf, but keep
His lwonesome sheade vor harmless sheep;
An' let en grow, an' let en spread,
An' let en live when I be dead.
But oh! if men should come an' vell
The girt woak tree that's in the dell,
An' build his planks 'ithin the zide
O' zome girt ship to plough the tide,
Then, life or death! I'd goo to sea,
A sailen wi' the girt woak tree:
An' I upon his planks would stand,
An' die a-fighten vor the land, -
The land so dear, - the land so free, -
The land that bore the girt woak tree;
Vor I do love noo tree so well
'S the girt woak tree that's in the dell.

William Barnes

The Peasant's Return

And passing here through evening dew,
He hastened happy to her door,
But found the old folk only two
With no more footsteps on the floor
To walk again below the skies
Where beaten paths do fall and rise.

For she wer gone from earthly eyes
To be a-kept in darksome sleep
Until the good again do rise
A joy to souls they left to weep.
The rose were dust that bound her brow;
The moth did eat her Sunday cape;
Her frock were out of fashion now;
Her shoes were dried up out of shape.

William Barnes

The Spring

When wintry weather's all a-done,
An' brooks do sparkle in the zun,
An' naisy-builden rooks do vlee
Wi' sticks toward their elem tree;
When birds do zing, an' we can zee
Upon the boughs the buds o' spring, -
Then I'm as happy as a king,
A-vield wi' health an' zunsheen.

Vor then the cowlsip's hangen flower
A-wetted in the zunny shower,
Do grow wi' vi'lets, sweet o' smell,
Bezide the wood-screened graegle's bell;
Where drushes' aggs, wi' sky-blue shell,
Do lie in mossy nest among
The thorns, while they do zing their zong
At evenen in the zunsheen.

An' God do meake his win' to blow
An' rain to vall vor high an' low,
An' bid his mornen zun to rise
Vor all alike, an' groun' an' skies
Ha' colors vor the poor man's eyes:
An' in our trials He is near,
To hear our mwoan an' zee our tear,
An' turn our clouds to zunsheen.

An' many times when I do vind
Things all goo wrong, an' v'ok unkind,
To zee the happy veeden herds,
An' hear the zingen o' the birds,
Do soothe my sorrow mwore than words;
Vor I do zee that 'tis our sin
Do meake woone's soul so dark 'ithin,
When God would gi'e woone zunsheen.

William Barnes

The Surprise

As there I left the road in May,
And took my way along a ground,
I found a glade with girls at play,
By leafy boughs close-hemmed around,
And there, with stores of harmless joys,
They plied their tongues, in merry noise:
Though little did they seem to fear
So queer a stranger might be near;
Teeh-hee! Look here! Hah! ha! Look there!
And oh! so playsome, oh! so fair.

And one would dance as one would spring,
Or bob or bow with leering smiles,
And one would swing, or sit and sing,
Or sew a stitch or two at whiles,
And one skipped on with downcast face,
All heedless, to my very place,
And there, in fright, with one foot out,
Made one dead step and turned about.
Heeh, hee, oh! oh! ooh! oo!—Look there!
And oh! so playsome, oh! so fair.

Away they scampered all, full speed,
By boughs that swung along their track,
As rabbits out of wood at feed,
At sight of men all scamper back.
And one pulled on behind her heel,
A thread of cotton, off her reel,
And oh! to follow that white clue,
I felt I fain could scamper too.
Teeh, hee, run here. Eeh! ee! Look there!
And oh! so playsome, oh! so fair.

William Barnes

The Turnstile

Ah! sad wer we as we did peace
the wold church road, wi' downcast feace,
the while the bells, that mwoaned so deep
above our child a-left asleep,
wer now a-zingen all alive
wi' t'other bells to meake the vive.
But up at woone pplace we come by,
t'wer hard to keep woone's two eyes dry-
on Stean-cliff road, 'ithin the drong,
up where, as vo'k do pass along,
the turnen stile, a-painted white,
do sheen by day an' show by night.
Vor always there, as we did goo
to church, thik stile did let us drough,
wi' spreaden arms that wheeled to guide
us each in turn to t'other zide.
An' vu'st ov all the train he took
my wife, wi' winsome gait an' look:
An' then zent on my little maid,
a-skippen onward, overjay'd
to reach agean the pplace o' pride,
her comely mother's left han' zide.
An' then, a-wheelen roun', he took
on me, 'ithin his third white nook.
An' in the fourth, a sheaken wild,
he zent us on our giddy child.
But eesterday he guided slow
my downcast Jenny, vull o' woe,
an' then my little maid in black,
a-walken softly on her track.
An' after he'd a-turned agean
to let me goo along the leane,
he had noo little bwoy to vill
his last white earms, an' they stood still.

William Barnes

The White Road Up Athirt The Hill

WHEN high hot zuns da strik right down,
An' burn our zweaty fiazen brown,
An' zunny hangens that be nigh
Be back'd by hills so blue's the sky;
Then while the bells da sweetly cheem
Upon the champen high-neck'd team
How lively, wi' a friend, da seem
The white road up athirt the hill.

The zwellen downs, wi' chalky tracks,
A-climmen up ther zunny backs,
Da hide green meads, an' zedgy brooks,
An' clumps o' trees wi' glossy rooks,
An' hearty vo'ke to lafe and zing,
An' churches wi' ther bells to ring,
In parishes al in a string
Wi' white roads up athirt the hills.

At feast, when uncle's vo'ke da come
To spend the da wi' we at huome,
An' we da put upon the buard
The best of al we can avvuord,
The wolden oons do ta'ke an' smoke,
An' younger oons da play an' joke,
An' in the evemen all our vo'ke
Da bring 'em gwain athirt the hill.

Var then the green da zwarm wi' wold
An' young so thick as sheep in vuold.
The billis in the blacksmith's shop
An' mesh-green waterwheel da stop,
An' luonesome in the wheelwright's shed
's a-left the wheelless waggon bed,
While zwarms o' comen-friends da tread
The white road down athirt the hill.

An' when the winden road so white
A-climmen up the hill in zight,
Da lead to pliazen, east ar west

The vust a-know'd an' lov'd the best,
How touchen in the zunsheen's glow
Ar in the shiades that clouds da drow
Upon the zunburn'd down below,
's the white road up athirt the hill.

What pirty hollers now the long
White roads da windy roun' among,
Wi' dairy cows in woody nooks,
An' haymiakers among ther pooks,
An' housen that the trees da screen
Vrom zun an' zight by boughs o' green,
Young blushen beauty's huomes between
The white roads up athirt the hills.

William Barnes

The Wife A-Lost

1 Since I noo mwore do zee your fe{'a}ce,
Up ste{'a}rs or down below,
I'll zit me in the lwonesome ple{'a}ce,
Where flat-bough'd beech do grow;
Below the beeches' bough, my love,
Where you did never come,
An' I don't look to meet ye now,
As I do look at hwome.

Since you noo mwore be at my zide,
In walks in zummer het,
I'll goo alwone where mist do ride,
Drough trees a-drippèn wet;
Below the ra{'i}n-wet bough, my love,
Where you did never come,
An' I don't grieve to miss ye now,
As I do grieve at hwome.

Since now bezide my dinner-bwoard
Your va{'i}ce do never sound,
I'll eat the bit I can avword,
A-vield upon the ground;
Below the darksome bough, my love,
Where you did never dine,
An' I don't grieve to miss ye now,
As I at hwome do pine.

Since I do miss your va{'i}ce an' fe{'a}ce
In pra{'y}er at eventide,
I'll pray wi' woone sad va{'i}ce vor gre{'a}ce
To goo where you do bide;
Above the tree an' bough, my love,
Where you be gone avore,
An' be a-w{'a}itèn vor me now,
To come vor evermwore.

William Barnes

The Year Clock

We zot beside the leafy wall,
Upon the bench at evenfall,
While aunt led off our minds wrom ceare
Wi' veairy teales, I can't tell where,
An' vound us woone among her stock
O' feables, o' the gert Year-clock.
His feace wer blue's the zummer skies,
An' wide's the zight o'looken eyes,
For hands, a zun wi' glowen feace,
An' pealer moon wi' swifter peace,
Did wheel by stars o' twinklen light,
By bright-wall'd day, an' dark-treed night;
An' down upon the high-sky'd land,
A'reachen wide, on either hand,
Wer hill an' dell, wi' win'-sway'd trees,
An' lights a'zweepen over seas,
An' gleamen cliffs, an' bright-wall'd tow'rs,
Wi' sheades a-marken on the hours;
An' as the feace, a-rollen round,
Brought comely sheapes along the ground,
The Spring did come in winsome steate
Below a glowen rainbow geate;
An' fan wi' air a-blowen weak,
Her glossy heair, an' rwozy cheak,
As she did shed vrom open hand,
The leapen zeed on vurrow'd land;
The while the rook, wi' heasty flight,
A-floaten in the glowen light,
Did bear avore her glossy breast
A stick to build her lofty nest,
An' strong-limbed Tweil, wi' steady hands,
Did guide along the vallow lands
The heavy zull, wi' bright-shear'd beam,
Avore the weary oxen-team.
Wi' Spring a-gone there come behind
Sweet Zummer, jay on ev'ry mind,
Wi' feace a-beamen to beguile
Our weary souls ov ev'ry tweil,
While birds did warble in the dell,

In softest air o' sweetest smell;
 An' she, so winsome-feair did vwold
 Her comely limbs in green an' goold,
 An' wear a rwoisy wreath, wi' studs
 O' berries green, an' new-born buds,
 A-fring'd in colours vier-bright,
 Wi' sheapes o'buttervlies in flight.
 When Summer went, the next ov all
 Did come the sheape o' brown-feac'd Fall,
 A-smile in a comely gown
 O'green, a-shot wi' yollow-brown,
 A-border'd wi' a goolden stripe
 O'fringe, a-meade o' corn-ears ripe,
 An' up agean her comely zide,
 Upon her rounded earm, did ride
 A pretty basket, all a-twin'd
 O' slender stems wi' leaves an' rind,
 A-vill'd wi' fruit the trees did shed,
 All ripe, in purple, goold an' red;
 An' busy Leabor there did come
 A-zingen zongs ov harvest hwome,
 An' red-ear'd dogs did briskly run
 Roun' cheervul Leisure, wi' his gun,
 Or stan' an' mark, wi' stedvast zight,
 The speckled pa'tridge rise in flight.
 An' next agean to mild-feac'd Fall
 Did come peale Winter, last ov all,
 A-benden down, in thoughtvul mood,
 Her head 'ithin a snow-white hood,
 A-deck'd wi' icy-jewels bright,
 An' cwold as twinklen stars o' night;
 An' there were weary Leabor, slack
 O' veet to keep her vrozen track,
 A-looken off, wi' wistful eyes,
 To reefs o'smoke, that there did rise
 A-melten to the peale-feac'd zun,
 Above the houses' lofty tun.
 An' there the gert Year-clock did goo
 By day an' night, vor ever true,
 Wi' mighty wheels a-rollen round
 'Ithout a beat, 'ithout a sound.

The Young That Died In Beauty

If souls should only sheen so bright
In heaven as in e'thly light,
An' nothen better wer the cease,
How comely still, in sheape an' feace,
Would many reach thik happy plect, —
The hopevul souls that in their prime
Ha' seem'd a—took avore their time, —
The young that died in beauty.

But when woone's lim's ha' lost their strangth
A—tweilen drough a lifetime's langth,
An' over cheaks a-grownen wold
The slowly-weasten years ha' roll'd
The deep'nen wrinkle's hollow vwold;
When life is ripe, then death do call
Vor less ov thought, than when do vall
On young vo'ks in their beauty.

But pinen souls, wi' heads a-hung
In heavy sorrow vor the young,
The sister ov the brother dead,
The father wi' a child a—vled,
The husband when his bride ha' laid
Her head at rest, noo mwore to turn,
Have all a-vound the time to murn
Vor youth that died in beauty.

An' yeet the church, where prayer do rise
Vrom thoughtvul souls, wi' downcast eyes,
An' village greens, a—beat half beare
By dancers that do meet, an' wear
Such merry looks at feast an' feair,
Do gather under leatest skies,
Their bloomen cheaks an' sparklen eyes,
Though young ha' died in beauty.

But still the dead shall mwore than keep
The beauty ov their early sleep;
Where comely looks shall never wear

Uncomely, under tweil an' ceare.
The feair at death be always feair,
Still feair to livers' thought an' love,
An' feairer still to God above,
Than when they died in beauty.

William Barnes

Tokens

Green mwold on zummer bars do show
That they've a-dripp'd in winter wet;
The hoof-worn ring o' groun' below
The tree do tell o' storms or het;
The trees in rank along a ledge
Do show where woonce did bloom a hedge;
An' where the vurrow-marks do stripe
The down the wheat woonce rustled ripe.
Each mark ov things a-gone vrom view—
To eyezight's woone, to soulzight two.

The grass agean the mwoldren door
'S a token sad o' vo'k a-gone,
An' where the house, bwoth wall an' vloor,
'S a-lost, the well mid linger on.
What tokens, then, could Meary gi'e
That she a-lived, an' lived vor me,
But things a-done vor thought an' view?
Good things that nwone agean can do,
An' every work her love ha' wrought,
To eyezight's woone, but two to thought.

William Barnes

Vields By Watervalls

When our downcast looks be smileless,
Under others' wrongs an' slightens,
When our daily deeds be guileless,
An' do meet unkind requitens,
You can meake us zome amends
Vor wrongs o' foes, an' slights o' friends;-
O flow'ry-gleaded, timber-sheaded
Vields by flowen watervalls!

Here be softest airs a'blowen
Drough the boughs, wi'zingen drushes,
Up above the streams, a-flowen
Under willows, on by rushes.
Here below the bright-zunned sky
The dew-bespangled flow'rs do dry,
In woody-zided, stream-divided
Vields by flowen watervalls.

Waters, wi' their giddy rollens;
Breezes wi' their playsome woens;
Here do heal, in soft consolens,
Hearts-a-wrung wi' man's wrong doens.
Day do come to us as gay
As to king ov widest sway,
In deaisy-whiten'd, gil'cup-brightened
Vields by flowen watervalls.

Zome feair buds mid outlive blightens,
Zome sweet hopes mid outlive sorrow,
A'ter days of wrongs an' slightens
There mid break a happy morrow.
We mid have noo ea'thly love;
But God's love-tokens vrom above
Here mid meet us, here mid greet us,
In the vields by watervalls.

William Barnes

Vull A Man

No, I'm a man, I'm vull a man,
You beat my manhood, if you can.
You'll be a man if you can teake
All steates that household life do meake.
The love-toss'd child, a-croodlen loud,
The bwoy a-screamen wild in play,
The tall grown youth a-steppen proud,
The father staid, the house's stay.
No ; I can boast if others can,
I'm vull a man.

A young-cheak'd mother's tears mid vall,
When woone a-lost, not half man-tall,
Vrom little hand, a-called vrom play,
Do leave noo tool, but drop a tay,
An' die avore he's father-free
To sheape his life by his own plan;
An' vull an angel he shall be,
But here on e'th not vull a man,
No; I could boast if others can,
I'm vull a man.

I woonce, a child, wer father-fed,
An' I've a-vound my childern bread;
My earm, a sister's trusty crook,
Is now a faithvul wife's own hook;
An' I've agone where vo'k did zend,
An' gone upon my own free mind,
An' of'en at my own wits' end.
A-led o' God while I were blind.
No; I could boast if others can,
I'm vull a man.

An' still, ov all my tweil ha' won,
My loven maid an' merry son,
Though each in turn's a jay an' ceare,
'Ve a-had, an' still shall have, their sheare
An' then, if God should bless their lives,
Why I mid zend vrom son to son

My life, right on drough men an' wives,
As long, good now, as time do run.
No, I could boast if others can,
I'm vull a man.

William Barnes

Wife A-Lost, The

Since I noo mwore do zee your fe{"a}ce,
Up ste{"a}rs or down below,
I'll zit me in the lwonesome ple{"a}ce,
Where flat-bough'd beech do grow;
Below the beeches' bough, my love,
Where you did never come,
An' I don't look to meet ye now,
As I do look at hwome.

Since you noo mwore be at my zide,
In walks in zummer het,
I'll goo alwone where mist do ride,
Drough trees a-drippèn wet;
Below the ra{"i}n-wet bough, my love,
Where you did never come,
An' I don't grieve to miss ye now,
As I do grieve at hwome.

Since now bezide my dinner-bwoard
Your va{"i}ce do never sound,
I'll eat the bit I can avword,
A-vield upon the ground;
Below the darksome bough, my love,
Where you did never dine,
An' I don't grieve to miss ye now,
As I at hwome do pine.

Since I do miss your va{"i}ce an' fe{"a}ce
In pra{"y}er at eventide,
I'll pray wi' woone sad va{"i}ce vor gre{"a}ce
To goo where you do bide;
Above the tree an' bough, my love,
Where you be gone avore,
An' be a-w{"a}itèn vor me now,
To come vor evermwore.

William Barnes

Woak Hill

When sycamore leaves wer a-spreadèn
Green-ruddy in hedges,
Beside the red doust o' the ridges,
A-dried at Woak Hill;

I packed up my goods all a sheenèn
Wi' long years o' handlèn,
On dusty red wheel ov a waggon,
To ride at Woak Hill.

The brown thatchen ruf o' the dwellèn,
I then wer a-le{'a}vèn,
Had shelter'd the sleek head o' Me{'a}ry,
My bride at Woak Hill.

But now vor zome years, her light voot-vall
'S a-lost vrom the vloorèn.
Too soon vor my ja{'y} an' my childern,
She died at Woak Hill.

But still I do think that, in soul,
She do hover about us;
To ho vor her motherless childern,
Her pride at Woak Hill.

Zoo--lest she should tell me hereafter
I stole off 'ithout her,
An' left her, uncall'd at house-riddèn,
To bide at Woak Hill--

I call'd her so fondly, wi' lippèns
All soundless to others,
An' took her wi' a{'i}r-reachèn hand,
To my zide at Woak Hill.

On the road I did look round, a-talkèn
To light at my shoulder,
An' then led her in at the doorway,
Miles wide vrom Woak Hill.

An' that's why vo'k thought, vor a season,
My mind wer a-wandrèn
Wi' sorrow, when I wer so sorely
A-trie'd at Woak Hill.

But no; that my Me{'a}ry mid never
Behold herzelf slighted,
I wanted to think that I guided
My guide vrom Woak Hill.

William Barnes

Woone Smile Mwore

O! MARY, when the zun went down,
Woone night in spring, w' viry rim,
Behind the nap wi' woody crown,
An' left your smilen face so dim;
Your little sister there, inside,
Wi' bellows on her little knee,
Did blow the vire, a-glearen wide
Drough window-panes, that I could zee,—
As you did stan' wi' me, avore
The house, a-parten,—woone smile mwore.

The chatt'ren birds, a-risen high,
An' zinken low, did swiftly vlee
Vrom shrinken moss, a-growen dry,
Upon the lanen apple tree.
An' there the dog, a-whippen wide
His hairy tail, an' comen near,
Did fondly lay agan you zide
His coal-black nose an' russet ear:
To win what I 'd a-won avore,
Vrom your gay; face, his woone smile mwore.

An' while your mother bustled sprack,
A-getten supper out in hall,
An' cast her shade, a-whiv'ren black
Avore the vire, upon the wall;
Your brother come, wi' easy pace,
In drough the slammen gate, along
The path, wi' healthy-bloomen face,
A-whis'len shrill his last new zong:
An' when he come avore the door,
He met vrom you his woone smile mwore.

Now you that wer the daughter there,
Be mother on a husband's vloor,
An' mid ye meet wi' less o' care
Than what your harty mother bore;
An' if abroad I have to rue
The bitter tongue, or wrongvul deed,

Mid I come hwome to share wi' you
What 's needvul free o' pinchen need:
An' vind that you ha' still in store
My evenen meal, an' woone smile mwore.

William Barnes

Zummer An' Winter

When I led by zummer streams
The pride o' Lea, as naighbours thought her,
While the zun, wi' evenen beams,
Did cast our sheades athirt the water;
Winds a-blowen,
Streams a-flowen,
Skies a-glowen,
Tokens ov my jay zoo fleeten,
Heightened it, that happy meeten.

Then, when maid an' man took pleaces,
Gay in winter's Chris'mas dances,
Shown in their merry feaces
Kindly smiles an' glisnen glances;
Stars a-winken,
Day a-shrinken,
Sheades a-zinken,
Brought anew the happy meeten,
That did meake the night too fleeten.

William Barnes