

For Her I Dare

The ideal of the Society is that love makes a man stronger, not weaker. In defense of his lady, this man is willing to risk everything.

Hearken to me, there's a tale I would tell you
Of love and of battle, of sorrow and grief
The deeds of a king, and the valor of comrades
The favor of gods, and the fate of a thief.

Felled were her guardsmen like rot wood in winter
Boot-trampled earth told of how well they fought
As each man lay lifeless I knelt and I swore
That the sacrifice given would not be for naught!
I heed not the warnings of rain and of thunder
I heed not the cries of my own panicked mare
I heed not the tides that would tear us asunder
For her, I dare!

Sunk in a tree was a silver-chased dagger
Carved in the fashion of far Barbary
Hung from its blade was the pirate's demand
For a ransom in gold that our lady go free!

I am the blade, but by her I am tempered
Strong in her love, I've a deed to perform
Set well our sails in the wake of the pirates
They are the shadow, but I am the storm!

I heed not the warnings of rain and of thunder
I heed not the darkness, I will not despair!
I heed not the tides that would tear us asunder
For her, I dare!

We put to the ocean in the swiftest of vessels
To sail on the Mediterranean Sea
But too light our ships for the winds of the gale
And the torrents of rain lashing mercilessly

"Mercy!" I cried to the god of the ocean
And spoke of the beauty my lady possessed,
How like the god's own graceful daughters she seemed,
And I offered my faith for his aid in my quest.

Thunderclouds parted, the sun lit the heavens,
The sea turned to glass as we sighted our prey
With the winds now behind us, we measured the distance
Soon their ships lay but a few leagues away!

"Now to your weapons, my men and companions!
Now for this perfidy they shall atone!
Leave not a man of the pirate's crew standing,
The head of its captain I claim for my own!"

I heed not the warnings of rain and of thunder
I heed not the fury of bloody corsair!
I heed not the tides that would tear us asunder
For her, I dare!

Bright were the banners and loud were the cheers
The morning my lady returned to my hall
And bright is the temple I caused to be raised
To the god and his power who heeded my call!

Of love and of battle, of sorrow and grief
Of valor and favor, my tale I have told—
This wisdom you hear from the lips of a king,
That no deed done for love can be counted too bold!

I heeded not darkness, nor rain, nor the thunder
And any who'd doubt me, be wise, and beware!
No force under heaven shall tear us asunder

For her, I dared! For her, I dared!

Words by Samantha Moore and Lisa Theriot
Music by Samantha Moore
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Song of the Red War Boat

Words by Rudyard Kipling, from "The Conversion of St. Wilfrid" (A.D.683), published in Rewards and Fairies, 1910.

Shove off from the wharf-edge! Steady!
Watch for a smooth! Give way!
If she feels the lop already
She'll stand on her head in the bay.
It's ebb--it's dusk--it's blowing—
The shoals are a mile of white,
But (snatch her along!) we're going
To find our master tonight.

For we hold that in all disaster
Of shipwreck, storm, or sword,
A Man must stand by his Master
When once he has pledged his word.

Raging seas have we rowed in
But we seldom saw them thus,
Our master is angry with Odin--
Odin is angry with us!
Heavy odds have we taken,
But never before such odds.
The Gods know they are forsaken.
We must risk the wrath of the Gods!

Over the crest she flies from,
Into its hollow she drops,
Cringes and clears her eyes from
The wind-torn breaker-tops,
Ere out on the shrieking shoulder
Of a hill-high surge she drives.
Meet her! Meet her and hold her!
Pull for your scoundrel lives!

The thunders bellow and clamor
The harm that they mean to do!
There goes Thor's own Hammer
Cracking the dark in two!
Close! But the blow has missed her,
Here comes the wind of the blow!
Row or the squall! 'll twist her
Broadside on to it!--Row!

Heark'ee, Thor of the Thunder!
We are not here for a jest—
For wager, warfare, or plunder,
Or to put your power to test.
This work is none of our wishing--
We would house at home if we might,
But our master is wrecked out fishing.
We go to find him to-night.

For we hold that in all disaster--
As the Gods Themselves have said--
A Man must stand by his Master
Till one of the two is dead.

That is our way of thinking,
Now you can do as you will,

While we try to save her from sinking
And hold her head to it still.
Bale her and keep her moving,
Or she'll break her back in the trough...
Who said the weather's improving,
Or the swells are taking off?

Sodden, and chafed and aching,
Gone in the loins and knees--
No matter--the day is breaking,
And there's far less weight to the seas!
Up mast, and finish baling--
In oar, and out with mead--
The rest will be two-reef sailing...
That was a night indeed!

But we hold it in all disaster
(And faith, we have found it true!)
If only you stand by your Master,
The Gods will stand by you!

Words by Rudyard Kipling, published 1910
Music by Leslie Fish
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The Peasant Knight

Mistress Rosalind Jehanne wrote this fine song based on a story told by Lord Allen Garretson (February, 1995). Nobility is not the accident of your birth, but the force of your character.

A young boy high on the battlements stood
As he swept up the cold grey stones
And he gazed with delight at the lists,
 where the banners flew
Where the knights in bright armour were jousting there
On their steeds of dapple and roan
And the archers drew up their longbows made of yew.

Oh I have the heart of a warrior!
And although I am low-born, I hope one day I'll be sworn
To be a knight, so I can fight to serve my lord.

The years passed by, and the steward's son
Grew into a comely youth
He was strong of arm, and as fair as a summer sky

But the o'er--proud knight took no notice of him,
Save occasional sharp reproof
Yet undaunted were his dreams of glory high.
Oh I have the heart of a warrior!
And although I be base-born, still I hope one day I'm sworn
To be a knight, and pledge my might to king and lord

The knight was summoned by his Majesty
To war in a distant land
On crusade, where honor and glory could be won.
He journeyed forth on his battle steed,
With his greatsword at his hand
In his retinue of men, was the steward's son.

Oh I have the heart of a warrior!
And full glad am I this morn, at his side, for I have sworn
To serve my knight, so he may fight for his liege lord

The battle fierce around them raged,
And the press of men was hard;
The knight grew faint of heart, and fain would flee.
But as he turned his steed,
He found the path away was barred,
And he fell from top his horse most cowardly.

For he had not the heart of a warrior,
And although he was high-born,
 yet that day he had forsworn
To be a knight, denied his vow to King and lord

The steward's son leaped into the fray,
Ar-med only with his knife
And defiant stood 'tween his master and his foes.
"Oh God above, unto you I pray,
To protect my noble's life,
And to give me strength to withstand these many blows."

But I have the heart of a warrior!
And no matter I'm base born, for on this day have I sworn
To play the knight, and I must fight to save my lord.

The King rode out at the break of day,
And his heart was full of woe,
For His comrades dead, though a victory great was won.
He found the knight unharmed,
Within a circle of slain foes
And cradled in his arms, was the steward's son.

"Oh he has the heart of a warrior!
And although he is base born,
 yet this day I'd have him sworn
To be a knight, for he would die to save his lord."

The King dubbed him upon the field,
"Arise, Sir Knight" said he
But the lad could not obey the King's command
And with his dying breath he gave his oath of fealty
And he held the sword with the last touch of his hand

For he had the heart of a warrior!
But for men of women born,
 comes the day the soul has sworn
To take to flight, and dwell in sight of Heaven's lord.

They bore him aloft upon their shields
With the knight's sword by his side
And they buried him with the honours due his life.
And evermore did the humbled knight,
In a golden burnished sheath
Carry on his belt that old and rusted knife.

May you have the heart of a warrior!
And no matter how you're born,
 for on this day you have sworn
To be a knight, with honour bright for King and lord

For today you are reborn
As a knight, and you have won
The golden chain, the belt of white, and silver sword.

Words and music by Jonna Davidson
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Argent and Azure

A song for Atlantia.

I stand amid argent and azure
The sea and the sky parted soft by the foam
Yet sorrow's companion, this pleasure
For day breaks and I must take leave of my home
Though great is the love that I bear for this land
And parting brings headache full sore
My will it is hardened by duty's demand
Proudly I'll heed the drums calling to war.

I dwell in Atlantia's splendor
And great is her wealth both in grace and in might
Her Queen crowned with beauty and honor
Her King ever bold in defense of the right
Be he squire or knight, be he peasant or peer
Humility's servant he stands
An able companion, a brave volunteer,
When maiden or mistress his service commands.

If chivalry shines before valor
If courtesy stands as the purest acclaim
If the standard of goodness is honor
Then first among peers is Atlantia's name
So clad in our mail, to our weapons we cling
In treaty and friendship full sworn
For love and for duty we follow our King
In aid of our allies we march on the morn.

I stand amid argent and azure
With brothers in arms, for the battle arrayed
The might of our forces to measure
And answer our kinsmen who've called for our aid
And though I must march with my back to the sea,
My gaze turned away from the tide,
I carry Atlantia's colors with me,
Her banners proclaiming our kingdom, our pride.
Stand amid argent and azure...

Words by Samantha Moore and Lisa Theriot
Music by Samantha Moore
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Folk of the Plaid

A song by Master Morríc Haast of Trimarís.

Ken ye the heart of the folk o' the plaid?
Wonder as many of what they are made
For they're hard as the highlands and cold as Loch Moy
The Scots hae a spirit, ye nae can destroy

Born in the damp winds and raised in the hills
Those who reach manhood have iron-like wills
For the reivers and the rovers and the brigands it's known
A Scotsman looks after his clan and his own

Chorus: So it's hey for the highlands, hello for the low
 Leave a Scot breathing, he'll strike the last blow
 As the chieftain of England so angrily knows
 The thistle bows not to the rose
 The thistle bows not to the rose

Now French ladies charm with their glances and sighs
But find ye a lassie with fire in her eyes
Scots girls are fiery, they're long and their lean
And sharper of wit than a dirk it is keen

Now loving the women's like juggling with knives
Too many at once and they'll cut through your lies
Find ye but one lass and stay to her true
She'll fight at your back and share in all you do. CH

Now some call us heartless and vicious and cruel
A Scot's a survivor and nobody's fool
We're branded through the ages as wagers of strife
Sometimes it takes a hard man to lead a hard life

So we'll pipe till the blood sings and drink liquid fire!
Watch where you tread lest you risk Scottish ire
Hark ye these words of the Macintosh clan
"Touch not the cat, without a gloved hand!" CH

The thistle bows not to the red English rose!

Words and music by William Ritchie
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Captain, Oh Captain

Written by Mistress Tangwystyl verch Morgant Glasvryn. There just aren't enough funny war songs.

Captain, oh Captain, there's trouble, I fear
From over the hillside an army's appeared
The castle's surrounded for more than a mile
And it looks like they're planning to stay for awhile.

Keep the gate bolted, our banner on high,
And caution the sentries to keep a sharp eye!
The men of this castle are sturdy and tough
We're loyal and brave when the going is rough!

Captain, oh Captain, there's trouble, I fear
Our walls still stand firm, but I see no help near
Our storerooms are empty, down to the bare rock
And the cook has just roasted your favorite hawk!

Keep the gate bolted, our banner on high
And spice well my goshawk that ne'er more shall fly!
The men of this castle are sturdy and tough
We're loyal and brave when the going is rough!

Captain, oh Captain, there's trouble, I fear
The siege still continues, our peril is clear--
For though we have weapons in plenty, it's true,
The last of the rats has been made into stew!

Keep the gate bolted, our banner on high
We will not surrender, though death may be nigh!
The men of this castle are sturdy and tough
We're loyal and brave when the going is rough!

Captain, oh Captain, there's trouble, I fear
The brewers have told me—we've run out of BEER!

Lower the drawbridge! Let them do their worst!
We're loyal and brave, except when we THIRST!

Words and music by Heather Jones
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Belt and Chain

Another by Master Morríc Haast; this is a true SCA classic.

The days are too fast, and the legends long past;
Yet some would dream of a place
A place of goodwill, where beauty lies still
A bastion of honor and grace;
A bastion of honor and grace

Chorus: Will you wear the Belt and Chain
 That this dream may yet live again
 Swear your heart to Chivalry's art
 Swear your sword to our gain.

Take the young lad and make him page
Teach the boy to come of age;
Teach him fealty, service and truth

Give him these gifts in his youth;
Give him these gifts in full sooth. CH

Take the young man and make him squire;
Teach him arms to best his sire;
Teach him chivalry, strength without stain;
For one day he'll take belt and chain;
For one day he too will be chained. CH

Wear the belt as a badge of your word,
Bear well the chain, for your oath is interred;
Hold fast to honor, as hard as it seems;
For you guard the halls of our dream;
For you guard the halls of this dream. CH

Words and music by William Ritchie
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Atlantian Steel

Another song for Atlantia, this one designed for the army to sing while marching into battle.

Our might has been questioned by enemy blades
And so we now stand here together
Off in the distance our foemen await
As we don our mail and our leather
Soon shall the field of this dark battle quake
And we then take arms in the fray
Soon shall our blades taste the blood of our foes
But first, heed the words I would say

Chorus:
Keep both your arm and your mind ever steady,
Sharp as Atlantian steel.
Show them your arrows and blades. At the ready!
Show them your courage is real.
And as they lay dying, food for the Crows,
Let them die fearing Atlantian blows!

Hold or Advance, but never retreat
Show them the meaning of battle
Heed not the voice that would herald defeat
Drive them before you like cattle
And let them drink deep from the chalice of death
And let the draught flow bitter black
For any who challenge the rule of our King,
Let us vow they shall never march back! CH

A word to the foe with the wisdom to hear
Turn vessels of war from our homeland
Be greeted as allies, be welcomed as friends
But tempt not the ire of our strong hand!
For if in your arrogance you would unfurl
A standard of challenge on high,
We'll send it back bloody, for no blackguard's flag
Shall darken Atlantia's sky! CH

Words by Samantha Moore and Lisa Theriot
Music by Samantha Moore
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Who Serve the Soldiers?

Dedicated to soldiers of every generation.

Early one morn to the market I walked
A bonnet to buy for my hair
I passed a bold wastrel who called for a coin
Of two I had, one I could spare

A charity thusly supplied was no sin
Though he'd likely just waste it on wine
Though no longer could I my bonnet afford
A ribbon would do just as fine.

Chorus:
Who serve the soldiers who serve all the rest?
The few and the brave and the best of the best
In duty and honor and humility
They've all given some, and some give all for thee.

Later a soldier who'd served at the war
Took refuge with us for the night
He entertained all with his tales of the front
He gained great esteem in my sight
His quick wit defied any pain in his eyes
His words held no hint of regret
He'd sacrificed much, and he'd sacrificed more,
His one fear that we would forget. CH

I offered the ribbon I'd purchased that day,
Told him my favor he'd won,
He said, "Good my lady, your kindness endures,
Of greater gifts, I have known none.
For I was the veteran who called for the coin,
And though I must leave with the dawn,
Please let your fine ribbon remind you of me,
Thus shall I ever live on." CH

He left the next morn, and too soon I learned
That he'd met his end on the field
Defending his captain, my bold soldier fell,
In honor was borne on his shield
Each morning I rise and remember his words
And all he so willingly gave
That fine yellow ribbon I braid in my hair,
And another doth lie on his grave.

Remember the soldiers who serve all the rest
The few and the brave and the best of the best
In duty and honor and humility
They've all given some and some give all for thee.

Let us serve the soldiers who serve all the rest
The few and the brave and the best of the best
In duty and honor and humility
They've all given some and some give all for thee.
They've all given some and one gave all for me.

Words and music by Samantha Moore
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Hardrada's Bane

Written by Hrothgar Thorgrimsson, this is a rousing pro-Viking number.

Hardrada calls to war away on England's shore
To claim his right upon the throne
But a greedy Saxon thane thinks to call himself a king
And claim the English crown his own.

Great Odin breathes the wind to fill the dragon's wings
We fly across the icy waves
We fearless northern men go Viking once again
To claim our fortunes or our graves.

To war! To war! We're sailing off to war!
We fight for glory, gold or King!
The Danelaw calls, proclaiming our just cause,
The skalds in praise of glory sing!

Across Northumberland they surrender to our band
And agree to meet at Stamford Bridge
Yet with treaties to be signed,
 they do sudden change their mind
As Godwinson comes riding o'er the ridge

To arms! To arms! Go cry out the alarm!
Form ranks, make you ready sword and shield!
Stand tall and strong and sing your battle songs
We'll drive this foeman from the field!

For peace we weren't prepared,
 they have caught us unaware
Half our army back upon the shore
With sounds of battle-glee we race to meet our enemy
Yet our shield wall thunders under horse

Reform! Reform! Heed the mighty battle horn!
Form ranks, make you ready sword and shield!
Stand tall and strong and sing your battle songs
We'll drive this foeman from the field!

Out numbered three-to-one, yet we shall yield to none!
Our fury doth quench the Saxon rage
And as their army stalls, our great King Hardrada falls,
And with him falls the Viking age!

We taste defeat, yet we shall not retreat!
We'll die together with our King!
Oh, go and tell the glory of our tale!
Write songs for all your sons to sing!

Oh, go and tell the glory of our tale!
Of how the Viking warriors lived!
Oh, and how we fought and died,
 our shield brothers by our side,
With Hardrada at the Stamford Bridge!

Words and music by Robert Faircloth
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Song of the Shieldwall

And here's the OTHER side, another SCA classic by Malkin Grey and Peregrine Wynrider.

Hasten, oh sea steed, over the swan road
Foamy-necked ship o'er the froth of the sea
Hengist has called us from Gotland and Friesland
To Vortigern's country, his army to be.
We'll take our pay there in sweeter than silver
We'll take our plunder in richer than gold
For Hengist has promised us land for our fighting
Land that the sons of the Saxons will hold!

Hasten, oh fyrdsmen, down to the river
Dragon ships come on the inflowing tide
The linden wood shield and the old spear of ash wood
Are needed again by the cold waterside.
Draw up the shield wall, oh shoulder companions
Later, whenever our story is told
They'll say that we died guarding what we hold dearest
Land that the sons of the Saxons will hold!

Hasten, oh housecarles, north to the Danelaw
Harold Hardrada's come over the sea
His longships he's laden with baresarks from Norway
To gain Canute's crown, and our master to be.
Bitter he'll find here the bite of our spear points

Hard ruling northman too strong to die old
We'll grant him six feet, plus as much as he's taller
Of land that the sons of the Saxons will hold!

Make haste, son of Godwine, southward from Stamford
Triumph is sweet, and your men have fought hard
But William the Bastard has landed at Pevensey
Burning the land you have promised to guard.
Draw up the spears on the hilltop at Hastings
Fight 'til the sun drops and evening grows cold
And die with the last of your Saxons around you
Holding the land you were given to hold!

words and music by Debra Doyle and Melissa Williamson
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I Am Able

For Sir Forgal.

You ask as if heartbroken why I must go
And that you know not is my failing
You doubt that a part of me bides with you though
With my King I am on the tide sailing.
In life there is darkness though you've known but light
Each day I must fight for that fable
My fealty once sworn to my king as a knight
To my oath binds my sword if I'm able

Chorus: And aye, I am able
 My mind it is sharp and my heart it is bold
 Though older my body grows
 Each passing season shows
 That aye, I am still able.

You ask if my favor could better be bought
By one of more strength or more beauty
If some greater effort could better be wrought
To sway me from my sense of duty
I wish I could spare you the grief of your doubt
But wisdom and youth share no table
Though you curse a life you know nothing about
With each step I give all I am able. CH

You whisper your fear as by dawn I depart
I know there is much left unspoken
So heavy my burdens and heavy my heart
To think that I leave your own broken
I pray that someday you may yet understand
What duty and honor and Kingdom
Can mean for a man who has fought for this land
In defense of his home and his freedom. CH

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