

Tale Told in a Tapestry

With wool upon fine linen, with needles and with thread
Of deepest brown and strongest green, of brightest blue and red
The colour of our mother earth, the colour of the trees
The colour of the blood that spilt, the colour of the seas.

We sat to sew the story, we talked of many things
Of all the men and horses and the fight between two kings
We looked at all the drawings, worked out what we would do
Of who should sew the chain mail with the arrows piercing through
The axes and the wooden clubs, the swords with deadly blades
The carpenters, the blacksmiths, men of many trades

We thought of all the ships that sailed across the English Channel
So many we would have to sew upon each linen panel
With billowing sails the fleet set off to reach the other side
With William's papal banner their protection and their guide

We thought about King William on his way to claim his throne
Promised by King Edward to him and him alone
We had to show the bishop for he gave us this great task
A man of great ambition, holy orders would not mask

The wind was fair and soon the English coast came into view
The ships put in at Pevensey, with so much work to do
We stitched the eager horses as they stepped onto the land
Glad at last to feel that they could walk, not simply stand.

With camps to set and fires to light and animals to feed
Defences to be organised, King William took the lead
Along the road to London his rival he must find
He marched his troops relentlessly, a battle plan in mind

That battle soon began, it was fierce and it was long
Both armies were determined, each was seven thousand strong
The Norman knights were well equipped, the strongest in the field
The English fought on bravely with halberd, sword and shield.

And when this day was over, King Harold was no more
His valiant troops were routed, weary and footsore,
But William rode to victory, to be crowned on Christmas Day
The Conqueror, a Frenchman, King of England come what may