

Ann Ramsey: "Gallowglass"

1. Gallowglass (A Tale of Desmond's Rebellion) (by Ann Ramsey)

You served the Earl of Desmond's band
Two Irish squires at your command
But father wouldn't give my hand
To a mercenary with no land

But, oh, to see you decked in gear
Handsome soldier without peer
Swords and axes by your side
When you were called to fight, I cried

Gallowglass, sweet Gallowglass
Don't forget this Irish lass
You put on your armored shirt
Left me in a world of hurt

Queen Lizzy wanted Desmond's lands
To steal all Munster from the clans
Beyond the pale her forces came
Fitzmaurice stood against her claim

He raised four thousand, hired the rest
Seven hundred Gallowglass
In June of 1569
At Cork he broke the English line

Gallowglass, sweet Gallowglass
Don't forget this Irish lass
You put on your armored shirt
Left me in a world of hurt

Next, he stormed Kilkenny round
The English trapped inside the town
But reinforcements set them free
Our Irish armies had to flee

Lord Drury and his heartless crew
Killed women, children, cattle too
No stone nor straw was left unscathed
I had to leave for safety's sake

Gallowglass, sweet Gallowglass
Where are you my steady lad
Have they pierced your armored shirt
Left you in a world of hurt

The rebel soldiers dead or gone
Ruined Munster's maps redrawn
I wish I never came to know
What happened to my gallant beau

At Cork, the heads of rebel Earls
Were shown on pikes to all the world
On city walls there hung the scraps
Of seven hundred Gallowglass

Gallowglass sweet Gallowglass
To this day your Irish lass
It's years I've kept your tattered shirt
Forever in a world of hurt

Gallowglass, sweet Gallowglass
Don't forget this Irish lass
You put on your armored shirt
Left me in a world of hurt

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2. The Public Enemy (by Ann Ramsey)

I gave my best to public service for lesser compensation
The X-man calls us government surplus scattershot damnation
The geeks that took the seventh floor and take down our Web sites
Want us quickly out the door, they call us parasites

They took my job, they took my role
No common courtesy
But worst of all the things they stole
Was my integrity

Clutching my metro card in Starbucks my phone in dark mode
Everyone knows we're out of luck, the hunters have the codes
My treasured ID badge of honor I hold behind the lies
Only morsels left of meaning, vultures grab the prize

They took my job, they took my role
No common courtesy
But worst of all the things they stole
Was my integrity

Have the ones I served turned on me
Am I the people's enemy
Democracy, I've been devout
Don't send the hounds to flush me out

I make a dash to Federal Station, red-hats on the train
They see my badge identification, I see them pull the chain
The lies have spread, we're all defamed, the media give no peace
Impartiality's now a crime, years run down my cheeks

They took my job, they took my role
No common courtesy
But worst of all the things they stole
Was my integrity

In our invaded, looted city, honesty's a sin
So we stand and keep a vigil, hold onto truth within

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3. Three Times a Night (by Ann Ramsey)

I always wake up three times a night, three times a night
First time when I churn inside
I hear the bluejays scream for day
You've gone away, you've gone away

In dreams I find the other you
Honest heart, the moon in view
Fireflies bright as runway lights
You said you'd try the simple life

The second time because your poems, your sweet poems
Run round my head like demons
I fell hard for witty wordplay
You've gone away, you've gone away

The third time waking's worst of all, worst of all
Tangled in nets you hauled
Was I your catch too small to save
You threw me away, threw me away

You always followed your ambition
You'll find fame or maybe prison
I would have loved you wrong or right
And so I wake three times a night

I always wake up three times a night, three times a night
First time when I churn inside
I hear the bluejays scream for day
You've gone away, you've gone away
You've gone away, you've gone away

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4. Girl on a Bike (by Ann Ramsey)

You'd like to read the tiny type
On an album cover
It's in the basket of my bike
So I will ride it over

The cool kids party at the beach
Sparks fly in the dark
But freshmen's lives are not that rich
I cut across the park

A dollar in my pocket
A bike-key in my shoe
A note left in my locker
Heartache fresh and new

I was supposed to meet my crush
Last night to see the comet
But he's sixteen and stood me up
The sun set on his promise

You also had a disappointment
The girl with light brown hair
She stole your summertime enjoyment
Sweet nothing in the air

A dollar in my pocket
A bike-key in my shoe
A note left in my locker
Heartache fresh and new

You and I are girl and guy
We make a broken pair
Tonight let's ride across the sky
I'll meet you anywhere
What's not to like
Girl on a bike

A dollar in my pocket
A bike-key in my shoe
A note left in my locker
Heartache fresh and new

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5. Nash the Hunting Dog (by Ann Ramsey)

I'm Nash the hunting dog who loved my master's son
He gave me chicken legs and hugs, watched me run
I fetched their quarry in the dirt in ponds and lakes
I helped them bag a hundred birds, give or take

Nash, Nash, watch him dash
Watch him corner in a flash
When you whistle, Nash will come
Gives you all he's got, then some

One day a wagon full of police took them away
An empty house with nothing to eat, I couldn't stay
It seemed I wandered round the world without a break
I caught about a dozen squirrels, give or take

Nash, Nash, watch him dash
Watch him corner in a flash
When you whistle, Nash will come
Gives you all he's got, then some

A farmer took me home at last to guard his corn
I worked and left behind my past, slept in barns
I chased the crows from off his fence, stayed awake
At times I'd snatch two lazy hens, give or take

A dog with no bone, fed by no one
He'll hunt instead, how he was bred
He'll hunt instead, how he was bred

Nash, Nash, watch him dash
Watch him corner in a flash
When you whistle, Nash will come
Gives you all he's got, then some

The farmer kicked me so I ran, alone again
Dog-catcher took me into town, where I've been
Families won't adopt grown mutts who capture prey
I've been penned up here six months, give or take

Nash, Nash, watch him dash
Watch him corner in a flash
When you whistle, Nash will come
Gives you all he's got, then some
Gives you all he's got, then some

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6. Withered & Died (Richard & Linda Thompson)

This cruel country has driven me down
Teased me and lied, teased me and lied
I've only sad stories to tell to this town
My dreams have withered and died

Once I was bending the tops of the trees
Kind words in my ear, kind faces to see

Then I struck up with a boy from the west
Played run and hide, he played run and hide
Count one to ten and he's gone with the rest
My dreams have withered and died

Silver moon sail up and silver moon shine
On the waters so wide, waters so wide
Steal from the bed of some good friend of mine
My dreams all withered and died

If I was a butterfly, lived for a day
I could be free just blowing away

This cruel country has driven me down
Teased me and lied, teased me and lied
I've only sad stories to tell to this town
My dreams have withered and died

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7. Neanderthal's Lament (by Ann Ramsey)

Last nightfall as the moon arose
The skyline cleared its throat
I reached to pull my woman near
But she's no longer here
She's no longer here

After dawn I woke alone
Our cave-fire ashes strewn
My boys already on the hunt
For beasts to bear the brunt
For beasts to bear the brunt

We choose and chase one all day long
Our group of brow and brawn
The stars may witness our success
May grant the final thrust
May grant the final thrust

We've heard about the slight men coming
With their livestock running
They storm in hordes like packs of wolves
Build shelters in the woods
Build shelters in the woods

This fateful day I'll try my hand
Choose my strongest lance
Remembering she who left my sight
I'll clasp her necklace tight
I'll clasp her necklace tight

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8. The Anti-Hero (by Ann Ramsey)

Back in high school, I'd always been
Picturing suitors older than sin
I couldn't accept the real, in lieu of
Rochester, Heathcliff, Pierre Bezuhov

I met a writer 10 years my senior
Bohemian with a hippie demeanor
There's his garret filled with old books
Deutsche Grammophon and Frosted Flakes

He said, "Come and share some stolen times.
Hear my records, read my rhymes.
With poetic license it seems
I'm the anti-hero of your dreams."

Footloose as a new emigré
He'd hold court in a beatnik cafe
In between our rounds of flirtation
He'd kindly direct my re-education

"Come and share some stolen times.
Hear my records, read my rhymes.
With poetic license it seems
I'm the anti-hero of your dreams."

One day I felt my mind's confinement
I refused another reading assignment
His anarchist life being hardly splendid
I rose among the waking wounded

And, 'though I'd loved our stolen time
I wanted what was mine to find
And poetic license no longer seemed
Anything but a childish dream

Sing it high and sing it low
What to do with an anti-hero

College life was calling to me
Clove cigarettes and herbal tea
My bourgeois charm, I felt him say
Seemed already long flown away

"No hard feelings," he said, "little swan.
I always knew that you'd move on.
Since women like you don't need a guide.
I'll just see you on the flip side."

"Come and share some stolen times.
Hear my records, read my rhymes.
With poetic license it seems
I'm the anti-hero of your dreams."

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9. Jack Sheppard's Confession (by Ann Ramsey)

He's lived low and he's lived high
And even now the end is nigh
He still makes the ladies cry
Jack Sheppard's name will never die

He told me jailers make him bold
Said he doesn't harm a soul
Bounty-hunters never win
He keeps the wages of his sin

Break free, breathe free
No one holds him, can't you see
Hero of the trodden down
The darling of all London-town

Grew up a clever 'prentice lad
Whose master was a cruel cad
He taught himself to pick a lock
Tavern's his home, he never looked back

Broke into his old man's store
Helped himself to all and more
How the magistrates did wail
When Jack escaped their wretched jail

Break free, breathe free
No one holds him, can't you see
Hero of the trodden down
The darling of all London-town

The fast life of a thief he's led
Pretty Bess to warm his bed
Silken shirts and coats he wore
On High Street in a coach and four

Five times was he caught and tried
Never snitched, never lied
He told me how he'd make his way
From Newgate prison in a day

Break free, breathe free
No one holds him, can't you see
Hero of the trodden down
The darling of all London-town

On the lam for many a day
Cobbler broke his bonds away
But a wicked gang-boss laid him bare
Jack hadn't given him a share

The tumbril rolls, Jack's soon to be
Dangling under Tyburn's tree
Yet in amongst the ropes they tied
Around his hands, he's hid a knife

Break free, breathe free
No one holds him can't you see
Hero of the trodden down
The darling of all London-town

He still makes the ladies cry
Jack Sheppard's name will never die

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10. Let Her Go (by Ann Ramsey)

You left your Eastern home a year ago
To be near her on the windy prairie
How she drew you out here, no one knows
Seems your heart is hard for her to carry
The sky is telling you to let her go

Let her go, go like a feeling on a summer breeze
Let her go, keep the memories, but leave the keys
Let the rivers flow and let her go

You serenaded her with an old banjo
Cultivated cabbage and green peas
She loves the wild nights of Chicago
She'll never learn the language of the trees
Their blossoms say it's time to let her go

Let her go, go like a feeling on a summer breeze
Let her go, keep the memories, but leave the keys
Let the rivers flow and let her go

Your Volkswagen bug would make her smile
She always cried whenever you had to leave
How can it have been that long a while
Her tears are barely dried upon your sleeve
The angle of the sun you can't believe

Winter goes melting snows
Hear the big dreams playing on her radio
Last seen in black jeans
She's letting go

Let her go, go like a feeling on a summer breeze
Let her go, keep the memories, but leave the keys
Let the rivers flow and let her go