

Tam o' Shanter by Robert Burns

Tam o' Shanter (Original)

When chapmen billies leave the street,
And drouthy neibors, neibors meet,
As market days are wearing late,
An' folk begin to tak the gate;
While we sit bousing at the nappy,
And getting fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, and styles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Where sits our sulky sullen dame.
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter,
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses
For honest men and bonie lasses.)

O Tam! had'st thou but been sae wise,
As ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,
A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum;
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was nae sober;

That ilka melder, wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
That every naig was ca'd a shoe on,
The smith and thee gat roaring fou on;
That at the Lord's house, even on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.
She prophesied that late or soon,
Thou would be found deep drown'd in Doon;
Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk,
By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

Tam o' Shanter (Translation)

When the peddler people leave the streets,
And thirsty neighbours, neighbours meet;
As market days are wearing late,
And people begin to take the road home,
While we sit boozing strong beer,
And getting drunk and very happy,
We don't think of the long Scots miles,
The marshes, waters, steps and stiles,
That lie between us and our home,
Where sits our sulky, sullen wife,
Gathering her brows (*frowning*) like a gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath (*anger*), to keep it warm.

This truth found honest Tam o' Shanter,
As he from Ayr one night did canter;
Old Ayr, which never a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonnie lasses (*girls/women*).

Oh Tam, had you but been so wise,
As to have taken your own wife Kate's advice!
She told you well you were a waster,
A rambling, blustering, drunken boaster,
That from November until October,
Each market day you were not sober;

During each milling time, with the miller,
You sat as long as you had money,
For every horse he put a shoe on,
The blacksmith and you got roaring drunk on;
That at the Lord's House (*church*), even on Sunday,
You drank with Kirkton Jean till Monday.
She prophesied that late or soon,
You would be found deep drowned in Doon,
Or caught by warlocks in the murk,
By Alloway's old haunted church.

