

**THE BALLAD OF
JOHN DUNN, AND
OTHER POEMS**

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The ballad of John Dunn, and other poems by Charles Kinross

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CHARLES KINROSS

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BALLAD OF JOHN DUNN
AND OTHER POEMS

BY
CHARLES KINROSS

LONDON
ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET
MCMX

To ERNA HOPPE

*I have an audience of one,
Who sings my words and knows,
What I, poor writing-man, have done
To love the muse, when passion glows.*

*She's scarcely critical nor just,
Avows she only hears and feels;
Nor is she jealous, knows I must
For ever worship, where, in vain, she kneels.*

*She dreams of love and peace that so is won,
Of glory, hope and all for her and me;
And as she harks, my audience of one,
She hears the River rolling f'wards the Sea.*

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THE BALLAD OF JOHN DUNN

JOHN DUNN, alone he lives
Behind the crumbling cliffs,
John Dunn.

What is't you have, John Dunn, John Dunn?
What is't you have, John Dunn?
I have the sky, I have the sea,
What more could God have given me,
John Dunn.

I had a wife, yet not a wife,
And now I have the sea,
The grey, eternal, northern sea,
What more could God have given me,
John Dunn.

I have a string, I have a bow,
And fiddle-playing is all I know ;
But I can make, and I can take
The sounds the ocean sends to shake
The cliffs by which I live,
And on my bow I know, I know,
The ways that God and I shall go,
John Dunn.

THE BALLAD OF JOHN DUNN

I watch the seagull curl and queak,
John Dunn, John Dunn,
I hear the west wind turn and creak,
The grim north-easter swirl and shriek, ;
John Dunn.
I play as though my heart would break,
As though my life were yet to make,
John Dunn.

"There are wrecks to-night upon the shore,
John Dunn,
And the wind is blowing harder than it ever
blew before,
John Dunn,
There are human lives at stake,
So you'd better keep awake,
'Fore the ghosts come trailing in to you,
John Dunn."

I hear the rain rush down my roof,
I mark the windows' web and woof,
I play, I play, I play, I play,
I play and play my life away,
John Dunn.

THE BALLAD OF JOHN DUNN

And I hear them coming past,
Though I think 'tis but the blast
Of the deadly cold north-easter on the shore,
So I put them in my fiddle,
And I read you all a riddle,
That few shall ever master save myself,
John Dunn.

* * * *

The sun's a silent, misty god,
Upon this northern, wind-swept sea ;
But he and I the other nod,
We know that he and I have trod
Such roads to Heaven and Hell as be.

And oft the night, the evening star,
My music-prisoned soul unbar ;
I catch the sunset's dying glow,
I seize the moonbeam's ebb and flow,
John Dunn.

The rising tide is mine,
John Dunn.
The ebbing tide—I know, I know—
But ne'er a tide shall find me out
Till I leave off my song to go.