

**BALLADS DONE INTO
ENGLISH FROM
THE FRENCH OF
FRANCOIS VILLON**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649048687

Ballads Done Into English from the French of Francois Villon by François Villon

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FRANÇOIS VILLON

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BALLADS FROM
FRANÇOIS VILLON



*List, all that love light mirth, light tears, and all
That know the heart of shameful loves, or pure ;
That know delights depart, desires endure,
A fevered tribe of ghosts funereal,
Widowed of dead delights gone out of call ;
List, all that deem the glory of the rose
Is brief as last year's suns, or last year's snows
The new suns melt from off the sundial.*

*All this your master Villon knew and sung ;
Despised delights, and faint foredone desire ;
And shame, a deathless worm, a quenchless fire ;
And laughter from the heart's last sorrow wrung,
When half-repentance but makes evil whole,
And prayer that cannot help wears out the soul.*

ANDREW LANG.

BALLADS DONE INTO
ENGLISH FROM THE
FRENCH OF FRANCOIS
VILLON

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PORTLAND MAINE
THOMAS B MOSHER
MDCCCCXVI

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FIRST EDITION,
SECOND EDITION,
THIRD EDITION,

OCTOBER, 1904
APRIL, 1907
SEPTEMBER, 1916

A BALLAD OF FRANÇOIS VILLON

PRINCE OF ALL BALLAD-MAKERS

BIRD of the bitter bright grey golden morn
Scarce risen upon the dusk of dolorous years,
First of us all and sweetest singer born
Whose far shrill note the world of new men hears
Cleave the cold shuddering shade as twilight clears ;
When song new-born put off the old world's attire
And felt its tune on her changed lips expire,
Writ foremost on the roll of them that came
Fresh girt for service of the latter lyre,
Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name !

Alas the joy, the sorrow, and the scorn,
That clothed thy life with hopes and sins and fears,
And gave thee stones for bread and tares for corn
And plume-plucked gaol-birds for thy starveling peers
Till death clipt close their flight with shameful shears ;
Till shifts came short and loves were hard to hire,
When lilt of song nor twitch of twangling wire
Could buy thee bread or kisses ; when light fame
Spurned like a ball and haled through brake and briar,
Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name !

Poor splendid wings so frayed and soiled and torn !
 Poor kind wild eyes so dashed with light quick tears !
Poor perfect voice, most blithe when most forlorn,
 That rings athwart the sea whence no man steers
 Like joy-bells crossed with death-bells in our ears !
What far delight has cooled the fierce desire
That like some ravenous bird was strong to tire
 On that frail flesh and soul consumed with flame,
But left more sweet than roses to respire,
 Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name ?

ENVOI

Prince of sweet songs made out of tears and fire,
A harlot was thy nurse, a God thy sire ;
 Shame soiled thy song, and song soiled thy shame.
But from thy feet now death has washed the mire,
Love reads out first at head of all our quire,
 Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

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