

WE WEAR CHAIN MAIL KNICKERS

An Ynys Fawr Songbook

Volume Four

This is the fourth volume of a book of songs and poems, the words being made up by many people. If no author is acknowledged, I wrote it. All other authors are acknowledged with their work. This is a real mixed bag. Some of it is filk, some is straight poetry. Some of it is period-styled verse waiting for music, some is didactic. Some of it is very silly and some full of angst. They are not in here in order of writing, just in the order they fit best.

In regards to the filk, I place the usual caveat that it is not, except in rare cases, intended to be sung at feasts, but at revels and camp-fires. This is because, although filking is a period concept (even if the word isn't), the music, with rare exceptions, is not. If the music is period, then the song is called a trope and able to be sung at the best feasts.

As with the other volumes I hope that no-one takes offence at any of the words that I have used, but will accept them all in the spirit of fun in which they are written. It is **not** the place of filk to be cruel or vindictive but to educate and entertain. I hope that all persons and places mentioned can laugh at themselves as we should not stand too much on our dignity. Could all prose objections to the contents, and especially any libels of me in song or verse, please be sent to me so that I can include them with proper acknowledgement (see The Baron Care Bear Song). I hope you enjoy this selection.

Important Addendum

At the most recent Great Southern Gathering the attendant bards decided to remove the word 'filk' from our vocabulary as it does not properly represent what we do. We decided to use two words. 'Trope', a period word where new words are put to an old tune and we 'reverse engineered' it to mean 'traditional opus'. Here we agreed that a trope is only to be called that if the tune itself is of medieval origin. Opposed to this are 'mopes' a contraction of 'modern opus' or modern work where the music is modern and the words are new. We hope that this finds favour.

Χρῶλφ

Baron Hrölf Herjölfssen

Current version

09 October 2011

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Yang the Nauseating wrote this. He was promptly accused of being a Nazi. Given his ethnic background and complexion, this is rather amusing. It was written for the Dark Horde, a group of “concerned” barbarians, Mongols and Ninja.

Tomorrow Belongs to Me

The sands of the Gobi
Lie warm in the sun
The warriors and herdsmen ride free
But somewhere a voice cries “Move on! Move On
Tomorrow belongs to me.”

Ride Westward my children,
Where pastures are green
Rich cities encircle the sea
Tis time for your glory to rise and sing
Tomorrow belongs to me.

Oh Atenveldts grown
Much to large to defend
The Mists has its back to the sea.
The East and the Middle are weak from war,
Tomorrow belongs to me.

Together my Brothers
We’ll show them a sign
United we’ll always be free
The morning will come when the world is mine
Tomorrow belongs to me.

Tomorrow belongs
Tomorrow belongs
Tomorrow belongs to me.

Tomorrow belongs
Tomorrow belongs
Tomorrow belongs to me.”

This is one of the many excellent songs written by Rudyard Kipling (Do you like Kipling? I don’t know, I’ve never Kippled). This is not period, does not have a period topic, etc but is still very popular around the taverns.

Song of the Men’s Side

Once we feared the Beast; when he followed us we ran;
Ran very fast though we knew
That it was not right that the Beast should master man,
But what could we flint-workers do?
The Beast only grinned at our spears ‘round his ears,
Grinned at the hammers that we made;
But now we will hunt him for the life with the knife
And this is the buyer of the blade.
Room for his shadow on the grass; let it past;
To the left and right stand clear;
This is the Buyer of the Blade - be afraid!
This is the Great God Tyr!

Tyr thought hard ‘til he hammered out a plan,
For he knew it was not right
(and it is not right!) that the Beast should master Man
So he went to the Children of the Night.
He begged a magic Knife of their make for our sake
When he begged for the Knife they said;
“The price of the Knife you would buy is an eye”
And that is the price he paid.
Tell it to the barrows of the Dead - run ahead
Shout it so the Women’s side can hear;
This is the Buyer of the Blade - be afraid!
This is the Great God Tyr!

Our women and little ones may walk on the chalk
 As far as we can see them and beyond
 We shall not be anxious for our sheep when we keep
 Tally at the shearing-pond
 We can eat with our elbows on our knees if we please,
 We can sleep after meals in the sun;
 For Shepard-of-the-Twilight is dismayed by the Blade
 Feet-in-the-Night have run!
 Room for his shadow
 To the left and right stand clear;
 This is the Buyer of the Blade - be afraid!
 This is the Great God Tyr!

Tell it to the barrows of the Dead - run ahead
 Shout it so the Women's side can hear;
 This is the Buyer of the Blade - be afraid!
 This is the Great God Tyr!

The Pæð-sæccan Song

This song is also in volume two. I have included it here as it has developed a life of its own and verses proliferate. Martin the Juggler gave this Shire the original words (and the first verse) etc at the Bardic Collegium. Madelaine added the next two verses. Then we have; a group one, three from Maximillian, another from Madelaine, then Richard of Dunheved. It is now rather dated though, and needs more verses.

(Chorus)

One, Two, Three jolly men all in one line
 We have come a-pæð-sæccan and we hope you'll
 prove kind
 And we hope you'll prove kind
 With your eggs and strong beer
 And we won't come annoy you until the next year

First comes Master Hrölf he stands at the door
 With his tankard in hand and he's begging for more
 But we won't give him beer
 Cause it does not him suit
 So we'll give him water and juice of the fruit

And then comes Lord Tristram our fighter so fine
 With his steel helm a'shining and manners refined
 He likes his strong ale
 And he brews his strong beer
 And he greets all the ladies with a bow and a leer

And then there's Leif Gregson as sad as can be
 With a droop in his shoulders and bend in his knee
 But we'll give him strong beer
 And his company keep
 'Cause we know that strong beer will send him to sleep

Here's Butch and Studley, the squires from the play
 They're here to amuse us in their own special way
 And we drink our strong ale
 And we drink it all night
 And then to confuse us all four look alike.

In comes Miss Madelaine, our own double Peer
 "I'm not just a Laurican is what you'll soon hear
 For she loves a good song
 And she sings it so fine
 To entertain at the feast while we dine.

Then there's Lord Richard from the North of the Shire
 Within that group now he's sparked off a fire.
 He writes with fine hand,
 With jealousy we're sick,
 If there's one thing we can't stand its a real clever
 Dick.

Lord Melitus Zolotov Fedorov syn Velikij
 Of Pereyaslavl-Khmel'nitsky
 Oh Lord what a name
 It's certainly long
 And B.O.D help the Herald who pronounces it wrong.

And here is our gypsy, a lady so rare,
 With her tarot in hand, she finds wisdom in there,
 And she likes her strong beer,
 But prefers other things
 And she'll leave us to fly off on Aphrodite's wings.

And in walks Bro Max with a face of despair,
 He's thin as a beanpole and losing his hair.
 But we'll give him strong beer
 From a cup that is deep
 For he can't tell his jokes when he's fallen asleep.

The Seneschal's Song

I know nothing about the antecedents of this song. I received a transcript of the words from Madelaine (who did not write it)..

Oh I've pondered long on the mystery of things,
On why thorns have roses and why bees have wings,
One question throughout all my thoughts does persist
Is why things called seneschals have to exist.

An answer I got, from a wizened old man,
Who said here was how the whole thing began,
I leave it for you if you doubt or agree,
But here is the tale as he told it to me.

Once, long ago, Kings were simple and plain,
The King was the Law for as long as he reigned,
He had no need of the bureaucracy,
Just a King and a Queen, and the King then was me.

The Kingdom it prospered. We lived in good style.
We were well honoured and loved, for a while.
But then the crops failed, and the wells all went dry,
The hens wouldn't lay and the fox wouldn't fly.

All at once nothing was working out right,
It seemed that steel armour took rust overnight.
The bow wouldn't bend, the axe wouldn't chop,
The pigs wouldn't breed and the cats wouldn't stop.

All through the land the bad luck was the same,
So the people were looking for someone to blame,
And the whole thing had me a bit worried you see,
'Cause most often I found them all looking at me

So I thought, "What I need is a person or two
To divert their attention, I know what I'll do.
I'll set up some officers, they'll be in charge,
Of everyday duties, the small and the large.

I'll give them some titles with long fancy names,
So they won't mind so much when they get all the blame."
It worked and no more were those nearby the Crown
Afraid of their lives if their luck turned around.

Now when something goes wrong all the people can cry,
"It's the Seneschal's fault!" and I think that is why
Every King, every Queen, every Baron and Prince
Has a Seneschal standing close by ever since.

Scull it Entire

This was written by Rudolph von Drau (late of Ynys Fawr, current Baron of Stormhold), who had just joined, after the completion of our archery range and its “baptism of fire” - well maybe just baptism . . . it rained. By way of explanation, the range is at Stonehaven, the residence of Ianto and Tatiana. To the tune of *Mulligan's Tyres* - I mean *Mull of Kintyre*.

(chorus)
Scull it entire
The mead that Ianto makes
Scull it entire
Don't let it go to waste
Scull it entire, scull it entire . . .

Here in Stonehaven we cleared up the range
And got it all ready in time for the rains
Shifting great boulders and spiders and ants
As we crawled down the cliffside and ruined our pants.

(chorus)

The snapping of bowstrings, the whirring of shafts,
The cursing of archers who watch them fly past
The Wall of Stonehaven, the bales piled high
As another shaft's broken, another man cries.

(chorus)

Why do some archers shoot swift, quick and true?
Why do they all keep their gear clean and new?
We'll keep our gear with it's grey tape and glue
and all arch to the kitchen to scull up the brew!

(chorus)

Cloved Lemon

This is not really a song, it is a poem. It is by Mistress Madelaine and should be read aloud in a Pam Ayres voice (Yorkshire accent).

I am a clove-ed lemon,
I'm passed from hand to hand.
I've visited great tables,
At feasts throughout the land.

My life it is quite spicy,
Of cloves I'm spotted through,
And I will find my body
Being passed from you to you.

I bring the ladies pleasure
With scented kisses sweet.
My greatest joy at leisure,
To make the lords so meek.

But still I am short liv-ed
For when the night is done,
I'm left inside a rubbish heap,
And to the earth am flung.

Shoes

This is an acrostic cinquain. Lord Edward suggested the subject.

Shorter than boots we are,
Handier than sandals we be.
Opposite but similar,
Easing your adversity,
Shoes for your feet are we.

Hope is Betrayed

A Kyrielle written in iambic tetrameter (1,2,1,3/ 4,2,4,3/ 5,6,5,3/ 7,6,7,3/ etc) for the Investiture Poetry Competition in Politarchopolis AS XXX

The Frankish Knights come from the West
To Constantine's proud new city.
Of Chivalry we need the best,
Hope is betrayed, the Empire lost.

With Usurp and with Mussulmen,
We hoped forlornly for pity.
These came from within our Ecumen.
Hope is betrayed, the Empire lost.

Innocent's host, the fourth to sail,
Sets for Christ's Eternal City.
But from its birth, twas doomed to fail,
Hope is betrayed, the Empire lost.

No brave kings led it on to glory,
No Dukes but a poor committee,
That seek their estates feudatory
Hope is betrayed, the Empire lost.

For ships they pledge a Magyar town,
Though Emeric now wears the Cross,
Zara's fate gives them no renown.
Hope is betrayed, the Empire lost.

For Dandolo, Doge of Venice,
Who counts his honour only dross,
Holds profit is *sui generis*
Hope is betrayed, the Empire lost.

His wife's father blind and throneless
The Swabian plots his revenge
A host to help the Angelus
Hope is betrayed, the Empire lost.

Issac's return will pay for their ships
Dandolo's gold, his eyes avenge,
The third Alexius' star eclipse
Hope is betrayed, the Empire lost.

The Frankish installed Emperors
By their sponsors are sore betrayed
The Emperor's deaths we abhors,
Hope is betrayed, the Empire lost.

Muzurphlus, the Purple, takes up,
In Emperor's robes he's arrayed
Now Franks do drink a bitter cup.
Hope is betrayed, the Empire lost.

But Greek fire's mounted on dromond,
The enemy's inside the walls,
Crusaders of pillage are too fond.
Hope is betrayed, the Empire lost.

An Emperor they called this Baldwin,
Barbarian enters the halls,
Now purple draped, a manikin
Hope is betrayed, the Empire lost.

Success comes only by treason
The Bulgars avenge with his death
The Latin's hopes now do lessen
Hope is regained, our Empire found.

We take small bites at his army,
Their tactics are a shibboleth
Constantinople will know our glee.
Hope is regained, our Empire found.

How then shall we know?

A sonnet in the Italian mode. I seem to be getting stuck on certain themes.

How then shall we know just what our distant future holds?
Shall we be renowned and famed for puissant skill at arms?
Placing foremost in our hearts our most able gent d'armes.
Is this our land's new destiny we want to be foretold?
Or mayhap we ought to look for what clever artisans can do,
Listen quiet to harpers bold and deft storyteller's charms
Or total up our copious wealth from the produce of our farms,
Or laud our scribes and painters who use bright colours of every hue.
If we were to slight these many skills, it would be most untrue,
But our future's writ large in another thing, in our people's heart.
In how we treat each other courteously, and chivalry do pursue,
For skill at arms, it matters not, if manners we eschew
Teach this we must to our newcomers, and to them the Dream impart,
Only then will each new generation, our true ideals renew.

It had to happen one day . . . (sigh). The following is a mope that turned up via the Rialto. The music is from "American Pie" by Don McLean. The words are by someone who wishes to remain anonymous (no wonder!)

The Day the Table Died

Twas so long ago, but I still I remember
How the legends used to make me smile . . .
And I knew given half a chance,
I'd kill so many with my lance,
And maybe, I'd be famous, for a while
So death and bloodshed I'd deliver,
With every arrow from my quiver,
All this bloody hassle,
Just to defend one castle . . .
I remember how he shed a tear,
When he learned of Lance and Guinevere,
And something touched me way down here,
The day, the Table, died . . .

CHORUS

Hail, hail to the fellas in mail
Slaying dragons, saving damsels,
Chasing after the Grail,
We fought off evil till our faces were pale
Wondering if there was a chance we might fail
Could there be a chance we might fail?

Hast though read the Book of Merlin,
With its stories that Sir Rod of Sterling
Could have penned for Twilight Zone?
Dost thou believe in legendary,
And all the tales of chivalry
Like the one about the longsword
In the stone . . .
Well. Lancelot came from Pa-ree
To serve in Arthur's cavalry
He sweated off his tail,
To wear the royal mail.
When Lance had won his confidence
He met Queen Guinevere by chance
And melted down his iron pants
The day, the Table, died . . .

CHORUS

For several years, Lance and the Queen
Had kept their meetings clandestine
Finding ways to be alone.
Twas on a fateful summersday
When Mordred found them in the hay,
And the frenchman knew his cover

Had been blown
Arthur cried Swear by Excalibur
That you truly did not lie with her
The notion was absurd
Lance said not a word
And so the knight no longer chaste
Unto his native soil he raced
Left Guinevere alone to face
The day, the Table, died....

CHORUS

Convicted of a grave offence
By Mordred's damning evidence
Guinevere was set to burn
Arthur loathed his bastard son
For all his work had been undone
But he vowed the tables would be turned.
Having Lance arrive to save the day
He carried Guinevere away
The King was relieved
His true love was reprieved!
Then Guinevere became a nun
And Lancelot had no more fun
And Mordred soon was on the run
The day, the Table, died . . .

CHORUS

I stand guard at the castle door
Though Arthur reigns not any more
Camelot is a memory.
It does my heart good to recall
The mighty kingdoms rise and fall
And the space it occupies in history.
The spirit of those days, it seems
Continues only in our dreams
For there we can enjoy it
Let no-one dare destroy it!
One prophecy of days of yore
Says Arthur shall arise once more
To make all as it was before
The day, the Table, died . . .

CHORUS

This song came to me from America, from Duchess Gabriel. She doesn't know who wrote it. Neither do I. It is to the 'tune' of the Arlo Guthrie number *Alice's Restaurant*. I have a little problem with the scansion of the chorus – but then I often have that difficulty with American songs. They do pronounce things just a trifle differently.

Alices A&S Documentation

This song is called Alice's A&S Documentation. It's not really about Alice, and I don't think she has ever even entered an A&S competition, its just the name of the song. So thats why I called it *Alice's A&S Documentation*.

You can make it as period as you want, with super glue and duct tape.
You can justify anything you want, with super glue, and a little tape...
Just slap some on, it wont hurt you'll see!
If the fighters can do it then why can't we?
You can Justify anything you want, with superglue and a little duct tape.

Now it all started two Presidents days ago, that is, two years ago on a Saturday, when my friend and I decided to enter some documentation for the A&S Prize at Estrella. Now Calligraphy and Illumination weren't the Categories at this Estrella, it was costuming and soap-making, or something like that, with stage arts, and people singing, and all of that. And bein it was the war and all, there was a LOT of documentation, and seein' as how they was all Laurels and stuff, it was some pretty good documentation too.

We got there, and we found all of this documentation in there, and none of it had anything to do with Calligraphy and Illumination, so we decided that it would be a freindly, and educating gesture, if we should enter our own documentation, so we collected references, and citations, and foot notes, and other implements of destruction, and proceeded to make a Book of Hours that would really knock their socks off!

Well, everything was going great, and it was time to show our masterpiece and its wonderful documentation when we discovered, much to our dismay, this little paragraph at the bottom of the rules: "Paragraph E) Documentation of the entries shall be a condition of entry. No documentation shall exceed 5 pages, and must be neatly written or typed."

Now, we had never heard of an A&S competition that had a length requirement as a condition of entry, so we just assumed it was a mistake. So we ended up with 13 neatly written, typed, laser printed pages, on good paper!

And then we went off to the feast, to carouse, and do generally what it is that Lords do in these current middle ages, and generally had the best time fighting an army that couldn't be beat until the next morning, when we got a call from Mistrell Laurel Seem checker. She said "Kid, we found your name at the bottom of a stack of documentation 13 pages thick, and just wanted to know if you knew anything about it." And I said "Yes maam, Mistress Laurel maam! I cannot tell a lie! I wrote that name on the back of that documentation!"

After speaking to Mistress Laurel and my Knight for about 45 minutes in the middle of the Camp, we finally arrived at the truth of the matter and she said that we had to go with her to the A&S contest and retrieve our illicit documentation, and also to go down to talk with her at the Laurels' meeting. So we trudged across the field, to the A&S competition, where people was reading away at stacks of documentation concerning Cotehardies, and Elizabethans, and other implements of instruction and retrieved our lengthy documentation. Then we headed to the laurels meeting.

Now friends, there was only one or two things that the Laurels coulda done to us at that meeting, and the first was that they could give us both Laurels for being so Academic and Honest and producing such wonderful documentation, which wasn't very likely, and we didn't expect it, and the other being that we could be bawled us out and told never again to be seen submitting too much documentation and that would be the end of it. But when we got to the Laurels meeting, there was a third possibility that we hadn't thought of, and we was both immediately volunteered as servers for the Queens Tea! And I said "Mistress Laurel, I don't think I can serve tea! I'm supposed to fight in the grand melee in half an hour!" Mistress Laurel looked at us like she was gonna cry and ruin our whole day when my Knight, who is also a Laurel said "Shut up kid, and serve the Ladies some tea!"

And that's what we did, there near the Laurels meeting, serving teas, and biscuits, to the ladies, and the queen and a bunch of other people, most of whom seemed to be wearing large crowns and a very disapproving look whenever we wandered by. Now, I wanna tell you about that Laurels' meeting. My Barony's got 4 Laurels, 2 Pelicans, a Court Baron, and 5 or so Knights. But when we looked over at the Laurels' meeting, there was Kings, and Queens, and all kinds of Dressed up Laurels, and my Knight was there, and both of the Pelicans! And they was using up all kinds of mundane equipment, writing down notes, and someone even had a laptop computer connected to the web! They made 16 copies of our documentation, complete with annotations, connotations, recommendations, and other inundation's, each one to be used as evidence against us!

After the Queens Tea, we decided to leave, and maybe try to get back into armor, when Mistress Laurel spied us sneaking away and grabbed us by the ears and pulled as back. She said "Kid, you're to wait right here until we are finished, and I want your fighter's authorization card, your membership card, your ladies favor, and your red belts." I said "Mistress, I can understand you wanting our cards and our favors and stuff so we can't go off and have a good time fighting an army that can't be beat, but why do you need our Squire's belts?" And she said "Kid, we don't want no Knightings". I said "Mistress, did you think they might Knight us for composing

really good documentation?" Mistress Laurel said she was just making sure, and friends, she was making sure because she took our daggers and our swords, and the swords of two other gentles who just happened to be near by just in case someone decided to do a Drive by Dubbing. So we sat there until later when Duke Gregory came by and bailed us out of the mess by saying something nice to the secretary to the Order who happened to be a friend of his, which also made her blush, though she smiled really pretty and reminded us why we play this game after all is said and done, and we got into our armor and had a really good time fighting an army that couldn't be beat until the next morning, when we all had to go to Court.

We walked in, sat down, Mistress Laurel came in with the scads and scads of notebooks containing annotations, connotations, recommendations and other inundations, each one to be used as evidence against us, and sat down. The Herald came in and said "All Rise for the Court of His Majesty the King!". And we all stood up, and Mistress Laurel stood up with the scads of documentation. And the King walked in, and he had tattoos on his chest, and she could see them, cuz he wasn't wearing a tunic, and his breaches were striped and there was this huge axe slung onto his extremely broad back ... and Mistress Laurel looked at her scads of documentation, and back at the King, who belched and asked where his drinking horn was, and then back at her documentation ... and began to sob, 'cause she had just realized this was going to be a case of Typical Norse Justice and there wasn't anything she could do about it, and the King wasn't going to look at her scads of documentation, with the commendations, declarations, recommendations and annotations, each one to be used as evidence against us. And we was told to apologize, and swear that it would never happen again, and then we had to go out and fight the King, which was hard, cuz he just couldn't be beat!

But that's not what I came to talk to you about. Came to talk about An Tir!

They got themselves a Kingdom up in the Northwest, its called An Tir, where you can get Rained on, Reigned in, and Snowed on. And you can be Afflicted by Canadian Accents, and have something horrible happen to you (called a twit) if you write songs like this! I moved up there, to Williams Gate, (They got a song about Williams gate) to get a job as a programmer, when I learned about the scriptorium in the Barony of Madronne. I decided it might be a friendly thing to make a visit there the next day, so I proceeded to get drunk, and do some Calligraphy so my Fingers would be stained with ink, and get the paint in my hair so that I would look and feel my best when I went to meet those fine upstanding citizens the next day. 'Cause I want to look like the Rebel Squire with a free quill pen from the Sovereign kingdom of Caid, man, I wanted, I really wanted to feel like the all drug down Rebel Squire from Caid with a will to paint graffiti on a Laurel Scroll - I wanted to BE the rebel squire with a loose quill pen, and knife to grind! And I was colored up! And I was colored down! And I was colored everywhere except my cheeks, which were colored naturally when I blush. And I walked in and sat down at the table there, and this guild mistress came over to me and said ... "Kid, go next door to the Duchess and watch *Lion in Winter* with her and tell her about yourself." So I went next door and I sat down. And I said, "Your Grace! I wanna do Kingdom Scrolls. I wanna do baronial scrolls! I wanna have a pen between my teeth, ink behind my ears and heavy metal poisoning in my veins! I want to make my own QUILL! I mean, my own Quill, QUILL, QUILL!" And I started jumping up and down on the bench shouting "QUILL! Quill! QUILL!" And then SHE started jumping up and down on, and shouting "QUILL! QUILL! QUILL!", and a cute laurel came over to me and pinned a favor on me and said "You're My boy!" and then she took me out to dinner. Felt pretty good about it too ... I proceeded down the hall, getting more solicitations, rejections, and general inspections, until I came to the garage, where an older gentleman, in a down parka, and mittens, and a white belt was mending a helm. He said, "Kid! have you ever been to a Curia?" And I told him that I didn't know what a Curia was ... and he said "It's like Court, but not nearly as fun if you're the one that did it." And so I proceeded to tell him the saga of the Alice's Documentation Fiasco, with full orchestrations, and medieval harmony, and dia-chromatic scale - when he stopped me right there, and said "Kid, have you ever been to a Laurels meeting?"

And so I proceeded to tell him the story of the A&S Competition and the Laurels court with the Court Baron and the 5 Knights, and the lap top, each one with connotations, implications, degradations, and recommendations that was to be used against me - and he stopped me right there, and said "Kid, I want you to go over there and sit on the bench that says Sergeants Only ... Now Kid!"

And I walked over to the bench there, with the Sergeants, where they put you if you're a fighter who might be talented enough to be a Laurel someday and not good enough to get all bruised up in mad dog tournaments, bear pits and other horrible things ... and there was all kinds of noble looking, mean and particularly talented people, sitting on the bench there. Damascus Forgers! Woollen Weavers! Chain mail Riveters! Chain mail riveters right there on the bench with me! And the biggest, most well dressed, with biggest arms and the Biggest Belt Buckle of them all came over to me and asked "Kid, what you get?" He said. I looked him straight in the eyes and said "I didn' get nothing! All I had to do was serve tea, and apologize!" And then he asked me "So what did you do?" "I wrote some Illumination Documentation ..." and they all moved away from me on the bench there ... "And creating a nuisance!" I said, and they all came back and shook my hand and we had grand old time talking about fighting and brewing, and making swords, and melting points, and all of that. And everything was fine, and we was smoking cigarettes and drinking home brewed mead, when the Knight came by with some paper in his hand and held it up and said, "Kids! This-piece-of-paper-has-47-words-37-sentences-we-the-Knights-wanna-know-how-you-messed-up-in-this-artsy-fartsy-thing-anyways-and-how-you-feel-about-politics-and-what-size-you-think-a-minimum-sword-thickness-should-be-and-also-what-you-think-about-Lights-and-any-other-thing-you-got-to-say!" And he talked for 45 minutes there while drinking our mead, and nobody understood a word he was saying, but he was a Knight, so its seemed kind of like a good idea to at least look like we was paying attention to him. But we had fun filling out the paper, and I filled out the Greek tragedy of the documentation with the 4 part harmony and the dia-chromatic scale, and everything was fine so I put down my paper, and turned it over and on the back was a single sentence: "Kid, have you rehabilitated yourself?"

I went over to the knight and said, "Sir Knight, you have got an awful lot of ..." it was then that I noticed the picture of his absolutely stunning daughter above the work bench there, and I mean, she looked, I mean, she was must have been, she had to have been at least 18! and decided that I liked this guy after all, "... Pizaaaz! in asking me to tell you if I think I have rehabilitated myself!. I mean, hear

I am, sitting on the Sergeants bench, and I'm only a squire! Imagine where I'll be after this story I'm writing gets let out?" And he said, "Kid, the Chivalry up here don't like your kind. And were going to have your device up to be re-registered by the Heralds so you can't fight in Crown." And that's just what they did.

And friends, somewhere down there in Milpitas, there is this little slip of paper, with a study of my device on it complete with documentation, and stuff like that and God only knows when I'll get it back and when I'll be allowed to fight in Crown ... and the only reason I'm singing this song now is 'cause you may know someone in a similar situation. And if your ever in a situation like that, there is only just one thing you can do ... and that is invite yourself to a Laurels' circle, and be heard loudly to proclaim "You make it as period as You want, with Super glue and Duct Tape". And you know, if one person, just one person does it, then they might think he is crazy, and maybe they won't take him. But if two people do, two people mind you, then they might think they know too much already, and not take either of them. And 3 people walking up and singing a bar from Alice's Documentation, and then they might think its an organization and might need to be squashed. And can you think, what would happen if it were 50 people a day? I said, 50 people a day came to a Laurels' circle and sang a few bars from Alice's Documentation? And friends, they might just think its politics and get nervous and actually change something!

And that's what it is. The Alice's anti-short documentation literate fighter movement. So why don't you join me in the verse ... just Sing it out, next time it comes around ... With feeling, so we'll wait for it to come around on the lute here, and sing it when it does ...

"You can make it as period as you want, with super glue and duct tape.
You can justify anything you want, with super glue, and a little tape...
Just slap some on, it wont hurt you'll see!
If the fighters can do it then why can't we?
You can Justify anything you want, with superglue and a little duct tape."

That was Horrible! If you want to end Wars and Tournaments and stuff, you've got to sing loud! I've been singing this song now for twenty five minutes. I could sing it for another 25 ... I'm not proud ... not smart either.

So we'll wait till it comes around again....

We're just waiting for it to come around again....

All right now.

You can make it as period as you want, with super glue and duct tape.
Except a lemming...
You can justify anything you want, with super glue, and a little tape...
Just slap some on, it wont hurt you'll see!
If the fighters can do it then why can't we?
You can Justify anything you want, with superglue and a little duct tape.

I Am Only A Simple Serving Girl

This drinking song was originally in Chainmail Knickers 1. It has since grown. It has original music. Seeing that none of us can transcribe it, you will have to learn the tune from an islander. I would also advise you to talk to locals about the many 'in' jokes as the primae facae joke is not always the real one. The first verse of this song was sung to me by Melysaunde Gwyllt ferch Gwion. The most of the rest are by me. Arnfinn's is by myself, Beatrix of Jelling, Elspeth Jamieson, Thorgrim Thorgrimson and Ailbh Millbourne. The second verse is about Leif Gregson. The third is for Martin de Mont Blanc. Subsequent verses refer to Master Ciaran Faolchara, Arianwen of Harlech, Baroness Miriam de Mont Noir, Baron Gershom of Ravenesdale, Piers of Malmesbury, Wystan of Wallesende and Baron Arnfinn.

I'm only a simple serving girl,
But I'm willing and I'm able,
It takes more than a simple serving girl
To get our Senechal's cup to the table.
Our Seneschal's cup, when all full up,
Resembles a trough or a fountain.
Through filling it up, the Shires bankrupt,
Ten score barrels and still counting.

I am only a simple serving girl,
But I'm willing and I'm able.
It takes more than a simple serving girl,
To get our Reeve's bread to the table.
Our Reeve can eat, in just one feast,
Enough bread for a mountain.
To satisfy him, the cook on a whim,
Put four score loaves and a cow in.

I'm only a simple Seneschal,
But I'm willing and I'm able.
It takes a mighty Seneschal,
To bonk bonk at the table.
A Seneschals lust, is liable to bust,
Anything less stable.
There came to be, the twins you see,
That bonk is now a fable.

I am only a working Pelican
Not the beast from the fable
My household it is quite renowned
I'm from the Gay Boy stable
A Pelican's task, don't have to ask,
Is service for all people
In working hard, no task is barred,
Ideals higher than a steeple.

I am only a simple Seneschal
At fighting also able
It takes a fighting Seneschal
To clean Augean stables
My armoured bust, had better not rust
My arms clean of all duct tape.
A Shining Helm shall overwhelm
The nasties who would make a jape.

I'm only a simple waiting girl
Who helps out at high table.
It takes a high skilled serving girl
At untangling tokens able.
Our Baroness, in times of stress,
Plaits tokens into tangles.
I have to be, its plain to see,
Unraveller of the dangles.

I'm only a working Raven Guard
Serving our dear Baron.
He told me that it's not too hard
A truth I did rely on.
The banners up, I've filled his cup,
The thrones they are assembled.
The running around, I have just found,
The task is never ended.

I was a drinking Seneschal
At running feasts most able.
But these are not the only skills
I bring forth to high table.
I wear dark leather, wave a feather,
And chase the ladies willing.
A scroll by me, a cup for thee
I'll hope to make a killing.

Another drinking Seneschal
Adds dancing to the fable.
A large and prancing Seneschal
Hops and does skip most able
His armour bright, it is not right,
His time is spent in cleaning.
He leaves behind, some things you'll find
But not his armour gleaming.

I'm this fair land's third Bar-on
A short but hirsute heritage
I set new heights as Baron
And prance all over center stage
My modesty, it overwhelms
Features chiselled and hair velven
It only lacks the pointed ears
To make me Royal and Elven.

The Baron Carebear Song.

This is from Sasha Vladimir Obelinskji. Unfortunately it is about me. The tune is to the Bear Dance. Rather sad really, I am not known for doing dance – a dangerous pastime.

I snuck to his room in the dead of the night
I crept to his side for a candle to light
But to my surprise he was nowhere in sight
For our Baron Hrölf goes dancing at night.

CHORUS:

He goes da da da
da da da dancing with bears
Raggy bears, shaggy bears, baggy bears too
There's nothing on earth Baron Hrölf won't do
So he can go dancing
da da da dancing
so he can go dancing
dancing with bears

Well we told Baron Hrölf that he should be good
And do all the things that we said that he should
But I know he'd rather be out in the wood
I'm afraid that we'll lose our Baron for good

Chorus

We bought Baron Hrölf a new cloak to wear
But when he came home it was covered in hair

And lately I've noticed some gashes and tears
I fear Baron Hrölf has been dancing with bears...

Chorus

Well we tried to convince the Baron to stay
And we managed to keep him at home for one day
Then the bears all burst in and they took him away
Now he's dancing with Pandas, and he can't understand us
And each of the bears begs at least just one dance....

Chorus

Western Kingdom Dreaming

It is very sad how, once you get on a roll, songs keep happening. This (and the next) came because people thought that new verses to *Serving Girl* were too easy and so wanted me to do a few more. This one is to the classic hit for The Mamas and the Pappas – California Dreaming. It should be sung with a male voices echoing each half line by a female.

All the fightings done, and the bruises blue.
I've been for a fight, at some tourneys too.
I'd be free from care, if she'd said "nay",
Western Kingdom dreaming, its Crown Tourney day

Fought against a Duke, won a lot today.
Fought down on my knees, but I won the fray
The Marshall called 'Lay on', and we began to slay
Western Kingdom dreaming, its Crown Tourney day

All the fightings done, and the bruises blue.
I've been for a fight, at some tourneys too.
If I hadn't killed them, I'd have failed today.
Western Kingdom dreaming, its Crown Tourney day
Western Kingdom dreaming, its Crown Tourney day
Western Kingdom dreaming, its Crown Tourney

A new July has come

The Princess did not like that one, because she was more used to Chaucer's normal seven-footed rhyme rather than the more usual English poetry form he sometimes employed. This was written for her. Again, as a Rhyme Royal, it uses a 1,2,1,2,2,3,3 scheme.

A new July has come with winter's cold and blustry rain
Brave ÆEdward and fair Yolande do take their rightful place
As true Prince and Princess of Lochac's fair and wide domain
In Aneala they took vows before their populace.
Of ideals so high, for all the land they are the underbrace
It is their chosen task to keep us from the darkling mire
And with their deeds and words most fair the people to inspire.

Set up the List board Tree

Even worse was to come. Master Cieran revealed that his favourite song was *The Sloop John B*. It was fairly late at night.

Set up the list board tree, for all the fighters and me
Around Ynys Fawr's towns, we fight round (we fight round)
Fighting all day, got into a fray.
This is the best list I've ever been on.

(chorus)
See how the sword does hit.
See how the shield does lift.
Call the Marshalls out.
I want to go fight.
I'll even go light.
Please let me lay on
I feel so fired up
I want to fight on.

The Baron he hits hard. He came in under my guard.
Chirurgeon had to come to take me away.
No broken bones. Ignore all my moans, yeah, yeah
This is the best list I've ever been on.

chorus

The Marshal he saw the hit. He said it was time to quit.
He said that the dent in my helm, it was big.
Leave me alone, Why don't they leave me alone?
This was the best list I'd ever been in.

chorus

We do come to see our brave new Prince

This is a five-footed Rhyme Royal. The name suggested the subject. It is a rhyme scheme much employed by Chaucer. This is 1,2,1,2,2,3,3.

We do come to see our brave new Prince
Seated with his lady fair beside.
Our vows of fealty we do evince
Our hopes with them do fair abide.
No need for bloody tyrannicide
Our rulers tried fair in tourney just
By honour brokered not battle lust.

How shall I tell the praise of my true love?

Written for the Poetry Competition at the Politarchopolis Investiture, a sonnet in iambic pentameter written in the early Italian mode (1, 2, 2, 1, 1, 2, 2, 1, 3, 4, 3, 4, 3, 4.)

How shall I tell the praise of my true love?
She is the font of all I do desire,
For in my loins she kindles up the fire,
And yet inspires to feats that lie above,
My soul on wings it flyeth like a dove.
Though I may quest as far away as Tyre,
Across the miles our hearts, as one, conspire.
Her embrace fits my soul like a glove.
How can I list what she doth mean to me.
She is my world, my cosmos, and my all.
Her heart she gave when I, on bended knee,
Did 'fess up having heart in love did fall.
Now back unto her embrace glad I flee,
As she, in love, doth wait inside our hall.

A marvellous fish

Again a Rhyme Royal. This time it is my daughter's suggestion. I think we have exposed her to too much Monty Python. Three-footed seems appropriate for silly verse.

A marvellous fish is the herring,
It comes from the bounteous sea.
To get it we must go fishing
And then we can eat it for tea.
Another use for this fish oddity –
There once was a man who used one
To bring down a tree – for fun.

The Ferret

This one is the fault of Lady Aeron of Schoental. I must get back to serious verse – but only if I get serious suggestions.

A tale I must tell of a marvellous rodent
With sinuous body and most graceful lines
I speak, of course, of the ferocious ferret,
An unusual pet for these current old times.
If delicate don't watch as it hurriedly dines
For its food it does gulp down most eagerly
And of manners has a supply most meagrely.

When calm thought

Still playing with the Rhyme Royal. My Lady suggested the topic after an afternoon so engaged.

When calm thought and peace and quiet I yen,
There is a place and deeds that serve me well.
I go and till the soil of my home garden
There is the calm of monk inside his cell,
There with fragrant nature's earthy smell
I tend my roses, roots, fine herbs and peas,
And quiet my soul it finds it gains surcease.

We give our fealty

This is a ballade. Not the best, but it is the first time for me. It is an English form of three stanzas and an envoy. The envoy must be addressed to someone. They are normally polemic. I swear that the rest just grew as I wrote (but I did have to change some earlier lines to fit the end). The rhyme scheme is 1,2,1,2,2,3,2,3R (with R as the refrain) for the stanzas and 2,3,2,3R for the envoy. I have taken some liberties with the refrain lines, but this is not unknown. It uses four-footed lines, which seems a common form. A ballade (as the name would suggest) is usually put to music, but I lack the skill to do this.

We give our fealty to our Royals
But when we swear what do we mean?
We catch ourselves in verbal coils
With varied futures to chose between.
Among the chaff for truth we glean.
Questions a many do we arouse
More than any could have foreseen
What do we mean when we take our vows?

From changes we do oft recoil
As if the idea was too obscene.
Modern ideas we must uncoil
Allow our Dream to intervene.
Fealty is known as a two-way stream
Bending a knee, not a kow-tow.
Let honour be your go-between.
What do we mean when we take a vow?

Choices need not pleasure spoil.
Lochac's been here for years nineteen
And storms oft have made it boil.
Little we've learnt to our chagrin,
Our ship of state we need to careen,
And no option should disallow,
Faltering we fall in the ravine.
What do we mean when we take a vow?

O Prince a conclave do convene
Our opinions like the flittermouse
Does logic make us contravene
What we do mean when we take our vows?

The Samovar

This is a fourteenth century form called the rondel, a derivation of the triolet. Madelaine wanted one about tea-pots, but tea pots may not be period, so she suggested samovars, which are.

A brazen samovar I do be
Taking pride of place on table high
Bubbling quiet as I do make your tea
Humble herb infusions dignify.

I sing my song, my own soliloquy
My own place I rightly justify
A brazen samovar I do be
Taking pride of place on table high.

Loyalty

Maybe this is too serious. It is a sonnet in one of the variations of the Italian mode: 1,2,2,1,1,2,2,1,3,4,3,3,4,3. I wonder what other parents do while waiting to pick up kids from school?

We can rightly ask what makes true loyalty.
Is it blindly following where other people lead?
Is it giving up your choice and to the will accede?
Or is there much more texture in a subtle tapestry?
If we can see, though dimly glimpsed, a new utility
Instead of idling waiting by, can we take the lead?
Trying all the while not to let our grasp exceed
Our reach. Can we move on then with all impunity?
Hold we fast then to ideals and to our dreams
Steadfast to a fresh vision and our new hopes,
Seeking always to do right, not others vain esteem,
Boldly work with ideals fresh from fields academe.
Then is loyalty laden with a new and different hope,
Loyal to pure ideas that in the darkness gleam.

One day, as sun was set

A new idea. Let's see how far I can get at writing something really long.

One day, as sun was set, I walk-ed in the park
So lost in thought I wandered where ere my feet went.
Rambling a-lost then to my steps I did not pay remark
Until I chanced upon a knight, his armour grievous rent
Full sore he looked, ragged and thin with famishment
His horse, once noble, looked as world-weary as he
He lay asleep, full armed, his helmet by his knee.

Wondered I, if wake him up I rightly should
Take him to my Lady's keep and tender care
Away both far and safe from this e'er darkling wood
Feed his horse and his bent armoured form repair.
Askance he lay beside his shield, blazoned vair
As charge it bore a cup all brightly coloured gold
His hair and beard were long, like many a hermit old

I moved on forward, his tir-ed slumber for to break
Did touch his mailed arm once lightly only there
But soft and light he slept and sprang he full awake
Jumped up, clapped hand to sword, eyes darting everywhere
He looked surprised at having been taken unaware
His horse, his guard, like also, in weary trance had slept
No watch for harm to other had each other kept.

He looked at me, dressed for the court, not war
Visage it did lighten and grip on sword it eased
Relax-ed his face it showed a man most heart-sore.
I spoke to him most gentle, his worry not appeased,
A spasm it did wrack him, and pain his face, it seized.
"Come worthy knight now hither, comfort lies quite near."
But these did seem to be the words that he could not hear.

“I cannot come and rest with you” said in tones so deep
“For deeply have I cursed myself by most sacred vows
And while I long to follow you, these I must a-keep
For weary though these bones may be, full rest I disallow
I’ve quested on, for far too long, to be foresworn now
Though old I look, I do be much older than I seem
When set I out upon this quest, Guenivere was Queen”

“My armour fine has rust away, replaced by those I meet.
My fine horse likewise must be the twentieth good steed
To give me aid and succour along the path of my great defeat.
Since I set out upon this Quest to answer kingdom’s need
In arrogance I thought that I would be able to succeed,
Where Arthur and more noted knights than I had failed.
I set forth on a Holy Quest, made vows now oft bewailed.”

“My shield it shows the Holy Grail, object of my search
A field of fur, as flayed I am, by my own sworn word
And onward, ever onward, my unsteady feet must lurch
I had me once a beauteous wife, unkindly fate I spurned.
Abandoned her, abandoned bairns, badly I have erred.
Not only them, but children’s child, no issue do I know
I’m lost to all because of my braggadocio

“How can this be?” in wonderment to him I cried.
“These things of which you speak are past a very long time?”
Bitter then he looked at me. “Perchance you think I lied?
I’ll tell you then how it came to be I’ve lived well past my prime.
But e’en to me this story lacks all reason and rhyme.
For I was born when Rome’s strong force still controlled these shores
I saw the rise of the man that Albion now adores.”

“When others took their solemn vows to find the Holy Chalice,
Additional vows I took beside to add lustre to my name.
So that I might get a chosen seat at the Table in the palace.
So that all the bards and minstrels would my fame acclaim.
For simply trying to find the Grail, it seemed to me too tame.
I solemn swore that no healing rest would I take or seek
Nor look again on kith and kin or my loved Lady meek.”

“I vowed that not e’en mighty Death would halt
My search and that I would be damn-ed if I my quest forsook.
Thus vainly did I seek my fame to so exhalt
My wife, now crying bitter tears, I heard a nunnery betook,
I know not to my children what fate has overtook.
Whilst this loudly in chapel I did rashly swear
Not just Arthur’s subjects were listening to me there.”

“The Lord above did hear my vow, and did in bitter jest,
Determine that I cursed should be to fill it to the letter.
I cannot rest, I cannot die, ‘til I complete this quest
For my pride, my oath’s become a shackle and a fetter
If any soul could release me, I’d be their eternal debtor.
I would that I a priest could find for to confess my sin
No longer seeketh I to be thought a great paladin.

I would that I could lie me down and take sleep and rest
Perhaps to seek out those who from my loins do descend
Oh what a boon twould be to be of my sins divest.”
“Truly in this I can help, and God’s grace to you extend.
For as it hap I am a priest, on this you can depend.
From monastery I wandered, my thoughts on Blessed Mary
In state of grace, and with God’s will, I found you solitary.

The Lord has heard your cry and your repentance true.
No further penance, than what God set, this I cannot vary.
I absolve your sin, but of what comes, nothing can I do.”
“Bless you Father,” he said to me, “but go tell you my story.
I give release for you to tell this tale admonitory
Now renewed my questing life, most joyful I pursue
With purer heart, who knows quite what, can now ensue.”

With these honest words, he bow-ed deep to me,
Donned his helm and climb-ed up to his gaunt steed
And moved away to seek in forest’s wild immensity.
But lo! A marvellous sight. A miracle indeed.
Not far off a glowing light bade him to proceed.
My own two feet were as rooted, in the forest floor.
As he rode off a shrine appeared with an open door.

And standing silent at the door was a lady fair,
Wearing the dull black habit of a cloistered Sister
I knew it was his long lost wife and not some estrange
And beside a man in garb of the Planta-genista
While behind a gladsome sight, a most holy vista.
I saw there was the Holy Grail, the object of his search
He moved within, the others too, all within the church.

The doorway closed behind them and the vision faded
Though it’s all gone for now, I do most blessed be.
For all my life, by this sight, my faith will be aided.
But listen those who make promise bold, with impiety
To this tale I tell and take it as a pastoral homily.
That when, perchance, an oath you do deeply swear
Speak only with true heart, or from that oath forbear.

Theophrastus Bombastus Paracelcus

After doing the last, I was told I was a philosopher. So I thought about this and wrote a piece about a real philosopher. I cheated a bit on the rhyme.

Theophrastus Paracelsus Bombastus
Decided to make him some gold
So he sat in a room with an abacus
Some chemicals and potions untold,
Looking for what the ancients foretold
Instead he summoned a demon succubus
So now we know him as Doctor Faustus.

It would be lovely to be a tree

My thoughts were on silly things, so I continued ...

It would be lovely to be a big tree
Waving in the passing soft breeze.
Classified correctly by scientific botany
Not caring about the lice or the fleas,
Home to the birds and the honey bees
Worrying only about one little thing,
A silly old man with a herring.

Be we then drunken revellers

This is a sonnet in the Italian mode. The subject should be familiar to anyone who has been to an event or meeting where the Royals have not been treated with the deference due to them.

Be we then drunken revellers in costume at a party?
Only aping manners while funny clothes we wear.
Paying scant respect to rulers, while quaffing vin-ordinaire.
Ignoring others feelings, while drinking deep and hearty.
Whether elected Baroness or combat-selected Prince,
We owe them deep respect or we belong elsewhere
If disagree we do with them, then quietly can despair
And occasionally at new faux pas do we make a wince.
But let us not make bad mistake or make our words to mince,
For worse or better our rightful rulers they do be,
And if we are going to be what we do claim we are,
Then toward them at all times, full courtesy we should evince.
So whatever our supposed rank or our own celebrity
Treat well our rulers that we may, our conclave not mar.

My father lies sick

I seem to be writing about the things around me. Written after seeing my father in hospital.

My father lies sick in the hospital bed.
He lies there so ill, coughing ever weakly,
His vitality and youth is now long fled,
In the pride of his age, not acknowledging adversity
From the image of my childhood, what a disparity!
Time has brought a once vital man low.
Can this be he I remember from so long ago?

How heraldic animals came to be

Guess what I saw today.

Once as a guard I went to Karakorum
I met there a man who had to the south sailed far.
He told me of a beast, unknown to Christendom,
Its head did to a little deer seem most similar,
Shoulders and arms of a man most familiar,
Legs it had to hop around, like to a rabbit
A tail like a lizard, did in that land inhabit.

When We Fight

This is a sestina. The form was invented by Arnaut Daniel, a Provençal troubadour, at the end of the thirteenth century. It involves a very set and elaborate usage of the same end words. In the short last stanza they occur in the middle as well. There is no attempt to rhyme. This is hard to do. Never again. I can see why they are not popular today.

When we fight we come to homage honour
For it is its own reward most pure
Being best is not the only winning
Courtesy and chivalry are what we most adore
We do fight for the honour of our fair consort
The Lord or Lady whom we do most admire

We choose to copy that which we admire
To our victors we give very great honour.
With those who have no honour we do not consort.
Our own ideals we seek to keep so pure,
But if these ideas are what we so adore
Then why is so much emphasis placed on winning?

Each list has only one who can be winning
But many more than this we can admire.
If all are true then all we can adore,
For each list must have enough to do it honour,
Not just alone in skill of fighting pure.
All now can give victory to their consort.

Thus it does fall upon each chosen consort,
Rather than praise only the title winning,
To emphasise the ideals both high and pure
To voice their thought on what they do admire
Ne'er placing mere victory before honour
Showing that 'tis the Dream they do adore.

When thus we have a ideal that we adore
When we choose those with whom to consort
When we place nothing else beyond honour
When we believe chivalry is better than winning
When our heroes truly we can admire
When their deeds in battle are so pure

Then we will know that what we have is pure
Then any chosen leader we can adore
Then we will all fighters so admire
Then we truly will honour our own consort
Then will no-one need to know who's winning
Then our tourneys will be steeped in honour

So hold your honour and your record pure
Forget 'tis winning that you do adore
Salute your consort give them plenty to admire.

When we're going off to war

This is a song. Well, it is a poem at present, but is of the form of poetry called 'songs'. It is light verse of the form 1, 2, 1, 2, 3, 3. This was popular with songwriters like Campion. Apart from that it is not serious. It is 'tavern verse'.

When we're going off to war
Armour polished, arrows in a bundle.
There are things we do abhor
As we along our way do trundle.
Like we not, being short of beer
For good ale it makes us cheer.

Give us lots and lots of foes,
There in serried ranks assembled.
No-one to face gives us the woes.
At our war-cry they have trembled
Let their knees turn into jelly
At our gambesons so smelly.

We follow banners into battle
No marshals on rules debating
Striking hard, not senseless prattle.
Clashing swords will drown out prating.
We don't need new fighting rules,
Want to see the blood run gules.

Fear we only rainy weather
And no chance to dry our gear.
It does make for mouldy leather
And duct tape it won't adhere.
If the mud comes rising up,
In the tavern we'll stay and sup.

Send us adoring ladies fine
And for fighting ladies, lords.
When we stop they'll bring us wine
And their favours as rewards.
Let them warm and happy be,
Keep us in good company.

Send us kings and send us knights
Legends from our shadowed past,
Not a fop in coloured tights.
At the drinking who'll outlast?
After battle bards make story
Of our deeds adulatory.

I sit here writing quietly

This is written for the poetry competition at Pennsic 1999. The theme is travelling to Pennsic. If it reaches the finals I have to get a volunteer to read it for me.

I sit here writing quietly, wintering in a land far south.
My words will travel far where perhaps I never shall.
If heard they are before you, 'twill be from a stranger's tongue.
But over this I cannot wax / sad and lachrymical
I can only send my thoughts to this contest / Monarchical.
For only words can travel / where bodies cannot go
And I write tales of places which only my heart can know.

For rely I must on legends and on traveller's tales
Telling me of many strange sights / not seen elsewhere
Of beauteous ladies / and brave knights with aventails
Of everflowing ales and to eat, most marvellous fare
Where courtesy reigns / and the buyer need not beware.
I am told that to get there people ride far from the West
Travelling for many long days, they ride without rest.

The kings of the world arrive there clad in battle array,
With their armoured Lords and Ladies at their side,
Do annually contend / and contest there in wild affray
Twixt Middle and East, the cause of strife they do elide.
Some talk of lands debated remarked as offhand aside.
But little do the noble combatants seem to care of why,
They take the field in serried ranks / there to fight and die.

These travellers have told us of pavilions and acres of tents
Of most worthy merchants, goods displayed in many rows.
Selling well-worked armour, clothes and all accoutrements,
Of tasty cordials and fine perfumes, sweet-smelling to the nose
Shoes and bags of leather and even parti-coloured hose.
Other tales and stories have I read of places like to this
But compared to others this is truly / a canvas metropolis.

Only Carpini's tales of Tartars / and their sea of yurts,
Do compare with what I've been told of this magic lake.
Even here a traveller, the Mongol presence he asserts.
He spoke of many different people, the truth he must foresake,
Of Vikings and Frenchmen / and of Saxons holding wapentake.
But who can judge these fine tales? Is one among them solo,
As accurate as Mandeville's said to be, or fanciful as Polo?

Even the people from my land have been seen far over there,
And I am told that some have made their fame and mark.
Like Sir Gregory of Loch Swan, rescued a Queen most fair,
And loudly playing bagpipes / a sound which many it does nark,
And Lochac's Drachenwalder King / rode a chariot round the park.
As well, I am told that Lochac's tabards are on the field well-known.
And all who do see them, use them, their fighting skills to hone.

Friends I have who journey there, riding in their Crown's column.
Never in flesh have I met them, but their letters to me speak.
I hope they meet together there / to sit in conclave solemn
To consider how we may act to best protect the weak,
And argue will they loud and long, for very few are meek.
Baron Tibor, Lady Morgan, Master Cathal and the rest,
And he who these words does speak, and gives it all his best.

One day I hope to travel, where now these words do go.
Over wild seas and through lands strange and far outspread,
And also through places counted still / as terra incognito.
But until then my thoughts will travel, like a flying arrow head,
And dream I will of mighty deeds / and victors garlanded.
So I hope that the traveller's tales have not told a lie,
That Pennsic is all they've told, and I'll see it 'fore I die.

When we are young

A ballade. I am not sure why I wrote this. I started out as one verse, took a veer to the left and headed off in another. See if you can work out the order in which the stanzas were written.

When we are young the world is before us.
Challenges a-plenty as all things are new.
Vitality helps overcome challenges onerous,
As we seek out dragons for us to subdue
Most of us care little for what will ensue
So do not sit down and plot your requiem
But live, and enjoy, and gladly carpe diem

In our middle age we have of life the best
Our strength is by age, but little sapped,
And experience passes as wisdom in jest
At all before us should be we most apt.
And to our challenges most able to adapt.
But we must learn from what we do,
Not be a recluse or experience eschew.

One thing is constant, we all grow older
But by two different ways can we do this
We can sit aside and from life grow colder
Or take our years as a blessed benefice.
Like a butterfly emerging from a chrysalis,
With strength aplenty for challenges renewed.
Not wallowing in untimely decrepitude

O reader listen to this moral tale
Take it to your heart and heed it.
Whate'er your age you will not fail,
If you seize on those chances infinite.

Once more has come the anniversary of your natal day

A Sonnet in the Italian mode for Madelaine's 41st birthday.

Once more has come the anniversary of your natal day.
With trepidation and dislike you do face the year ahead.
Each year it takes us further from the youth that we once coveted
As little lines on hands and faces, the advancing years betray,
As under social pressures we give way to panic and dismay.
But what skills and talents had you when you had your maidenhead?
Had you the confidence that finds you now so boldly spirited?
Opening shops and statements female making, while moulding your clay.
Some things you should know, and be in knowledge certain,
That the passing years, they do not make my love grow dim
For where would be Hrölf, but lost, without his Madelaine?
My love is fine and precious, like well-cast porcelain
Heated in the kiln of time, not cast as an idle whim.
It will last forever, not passing like a brief summer rain.

A trying life and times

Trite. The result of a bad session with my supervisor. I am sure similar things have been said since there were universities.

A trying life and times it is for a higher student,
Struggling to live and learn at university
Finding for your thesis the right new evidence
Are my theories, to the orthodox, but heresy?
The professors oft advise and teach most miserly
Should I take to clerking with a baccalaureate?
Or continue striving until I get my doctorate?

Chill, the winter's cold

This is a lai, an old French form and the Western equivalent of haiku with fixed syllables. Normally there are three 'sets'. This subject needed four.

Chill the winter's cold
Snow is taking fast hold
Ice sea.
Spring it does unfold
New lambs are bold
Go free.
Summer's heat unfold
Sheep are in the fold,
Happy.
Autumn's leaves are gold,
The year it grows old,
As we.

Water running down

This is another lai.

Water running down
Heaven opens up
Cold rain.
Trudging over fields
Try to keep it out
So wet.
Inside to the fire
Steam rising up
Feels good.

The Virtues

A Rhyme Royal in seven stanzas.

Should we set our life's destiny on blind trust?
Putting aside the rational to just believe
As o'er faith our thinking is but a crust.
Our convictions do need for to be robust,
For if to one solid thing we can cleave,
As Peter was, a rock on which to build,
Thus faith will be our pure essence distilled.

Who can see all the ways that lie ahead?
The pitfalls before feet as well as the joys.
Many paths are always before us spread
And fate it oft with our destiny toys
But if we have hope to give us poise
Then we can go calmly into our future
With certitude these paths to bind and suture

The poor will always be with us, we are told.
But poverty is not just lack of material or money,
The lack of things spiritual it does also enfold.
So loving to all those who lack, should we be.
Helping them by all the means in our armoury
Giving to them of ourselves in every way,
That we may not through deeds our beliefs betray.

If we are guided by our visions of Truth
Then we can seek to do what we see as just.
However in so doing let us not lack ruth
But in compassion's guidance we must trust,
And the Pharisees among us most warily distrust.
For living by exact rules will not Justice give
This we will only gain if we, our beliefs, do live.

As we do go on down the many paths of life,
With faith and hope that a righteous way will prevail,
There will be those who will on us heap strife,
And with much adversity they will us assail.
But this is a fate which we should not bewail,
But show the courage of our convictions true
And use firm fortitude to let us win through.

Anything we do carry to excess is wrong.
Even virtue unalloyed that is carried much too far
Does cloy, for we should be moderate our life long,
For temperance is a virtue strange and singular.
Too much perfection can with pride our souls mar,
And oft our little vices most sincerely repent
Show our humanity is not beyond admonishment.

For us to seek out the truths within the world,
For us to find which way our feet should tread,
Either we must have our future before us unfurled,
Or we need to show some wisdom in our head.
But prudence in our deeds is not oft exhibited,
As think before we act is something we need to do
And heedless words and action we must eschew.

The Sins

Having done the virtues, this one is compulsory.

My sudden anger, like a blazing pyre, burns forth
Consumed as I can be by my most righteous wrath
And on my spirit rage, like oil, it poureth.
To immolate all, it rises like the Behemoth
Alone I am as unto anger have I plighted troth
What room is there in my soul for gentler humour
When wrath, it grows and fills me like a tumour.

Lo! What hap if I am perfection incarnate?
Known far for wisdom, charity and my chivalry.
For me lesser beings try to flatter and ingratiate.
But my virtues do oft ring with blatant insincerity
As proud I am. Deepest sin and black iniquity.
But my vanity is but what the Greeks call hubris,
And my fall will cast me lowest in the dark abyss.

What? Am I clothed in finer garb than you?
Do you resent it when happy fortune upon me shines?
If others are praised does vert your countenance imbue?
Beware as bitter envy your shallow soul entwines,
Takes your joy until sweet meads do taste like sour brines.
For envy is its own reward as it does cast a pall
On life's pleasures as in your soul it grows a gall.

What is enough? For ever I do want much more.
More honours, more rewards and even more renown.
At least it can be said that I have no motive ulterior,
As greed does all other virtues and meaner vices drown.
I will come to covet all, from meanest token to the Crown.
But I cannot take pleasure in anything that I possess,
Since I cannot hold all, I must be ever comfortless.

Wake me up if something exciting it does take place.
I will look on, but doubt much that I'll take part.
For I find comfort watching the world proceed apace,
Thinking that I might do things, but never seem to start.
If dreams were real, how much I could then impart.
So why then does life just seem to pass me by
And sloth does my abandoned soul then stultify?

Known widely as a lover am I, a lady's man.
Devoting myself to finding maids aplenty to take abed.
With restless lecherous eyes, roving and ophidian,
At my belt a string of tokens, proof of conquered maidenhead.
But what solace do I gain in being by lust enamoured?
How can I know the true quiet love of just one other?
My endless quest will not, for my soul, find a true lover.

Send me much more food and flowing wine
For no appetite you've seen can be much larger.
Into juicy joints of meat I tear, quite vulterine,
And some dainty morsel first to make me hungrier
Alas I punish self, with my sin, as daily I grow goutier.
Like a lustful man I am, my appetite can ne'er be sated,
Although my girth does grow, my hunger it is unabated.

Is hopeful change then so much to be feared and dreaded?

This is a political sonnet in one of the Italian forms. It was written to help the cause of the Southern Principality.

Is then hopeful change so much to be feared and dreaded?
Are the boundaries we once set ourselves, now inviolate?
Do we cleave to the old until our strength does dissipate?
Must we to outdated paradigms be hopelessly adhered?
If this is so, then our best destiny we well may abdicate.
Ignoring those who, from outside, at our course have jeered,
We should set firm new courses, as on our way we've steered,
And boldly set forth, not in weak indecision prevaricate.
So let us then abandon old ideas with little worth or virtue
And chose to take our destiny firmly in our own two hands.
Now let us proceed onward and further wavering eschew
And this brave new vision will, with hope our dreams imbue.
Let us join together Baronies and create for ourselves new lands
Lest all our past works fall on down, then will we truly rue.