

Willie O'Winsbury

Anne Briggs

The king had been a prisoner
And a prisoner long in Spain,
And Willie of the Winsbury
Has lain long with his daughter at hame.

"What ails ye, what ails ye, my daughter Janet,
Why you look so pale and wan?
Oh have you had any sore sickness
Or yet been sleeping with a man?"

"I have not had any sore sickness
Nor yet been sleeping wi' a man.
It is for you, my father dear,
For biding so long in Spain"

"Cast off, cast off your berry-brown gown,
You stand naked upon the stane,
That I may ken ye by your shape
Whether you be a maiden or none."

And she's cast off her berry-brown gown,
She stood naked upon the stone.
Her apron was low and her haunches were round,
Her face was pale and wan.

"Oh, was it with a lord or a duke or a knight
Or a man of birth and fame?
Or was it with one of me serving men
That's lately come out of Spain?"

"No, it wasn't with a lord, nor a duke, nor a knight,
Or a man of birth and fame.
But it was with Willie of Winsbury,
I could bide no longer alone."

And the king he has called on his merry men all,
By thirty and by three,
Says, "Fetch me this Willie of Winsbury,
For hanged he shall be."

But when he came the king before,
He was clad all in the red silk.
His hair was like the strands of gold,
His skin was as white as the milk.

"And it is no wonder," said the king,
"That my daughter's love you did win.
If I was a woman, as I am a man,
My bedfellow you would have been."

"And will you marry my daughter Janet
By the truth of your right hand?
Oh, will you marry my daughter Janet?
I'll make you the lord of my land."

"Yes, I will marry your daughter Janet
By the truth of my right hand.

Yes I will marry your daughter Janet,
But I'll not be the lord of your land."

And he's mounted her on a milk-white steed
And himself on a dapple grey.
He has made her the lady of as much land
As she'll ride in a long summer's day.