

Lady Waters And The Hooded One

Robyn Hitchcock

"Will you dance with me, Lady Waters?"
And a bony hand plucked her gown
"Will you dance with me," said the Hooded One
"For the plague has now reached this town."
"No, I'll never dance," says Lady Waters
"For I see that your name is Death."
And beneath her mask she was sweating
At the Hooded One's fetid breath
"Will you dance with me, Lady Waters?"
For the fire dies in your grate
And your guests have gone and your lord's asleep
And the plague has reached your estate."
"Then I'll dance with you," says Lady Waters
"For the stars grow pale in the dawn
But I first must get my tiara
For I left it out on the lawn."
"Oh and if you get your tiara,"
And his eyes like coals, they did burn
"You must give me all, and must taste my breath
On the moment that you return."
"Very well," she said from behind her mask
"You must take from me what is mine:
I'll return to you and submit to you."
And the Hooded One, he said "Fine."
She came back to him and took off her mask
And the Hooded One, he recoiled
What he thought was sweat on her face and hands
It turned out to be tiny boils
"You must take from me all I have," she said
"You must take it all with good grace:
For I have the plague on my body
And I have the plague on my face."
Oh the Hooded One took her house and lands
He took every fork, every knife
And he took the plague and he left her there
Without anything but her life