

The Birds of Rhiannon



I

Your gifts: songs that never really entertained,
By three black birds on the lamp-post singing
Creatures cursed as much as charmed - still
The deal was sealed with longing

And everyone moved on - you fed the horses
And I fed the birds (the Birds of Rhiannon)
Three skylarks (to be exact) on the lamp-post
Singing - singing such sad, sweet songs.

Three birds (and a photograph), nothing more
In the witch hours freezing - shrouded creatures -
Still, I fed those birds (those Birds of Rhiannon)
And they rewarded me with useless song

One day a dead man sat up, groggily. He cocked
A rotten ear and stared at those birds - in
The witch hours freezing (shrouded creatures)
Gasped and, without a thankyou, he moved on

Later we met a leper, her skin unearthly white,
Face bruised, eyes bloodshot and pleading with
Those Birds (those Birds of Rhiannon) - their song
Sure enough, was healing, and so she too moved on

Without a thankyou - for joy forgets reward
Even to the worthy. And besides, the birds
Were not yet done: for a berserker charged us
Blood rage boiling, axe head swinging,

Death approaching - I was ill-prepared to fight -
Thankfully the birds disarmed the Viking, though

I do not know how - for they'd charmed me into
Sleep - the deepest sleep (those Birds of Rhiannon).

II

I have known no celebrity or praise - after all
Your gifts: songs that never really entertained -
Still, I have witnessed miracles, wonders of song,
By three black birds (skylarks to be exact) on

A lamp-post singing (three Birds of Rhiannon).

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