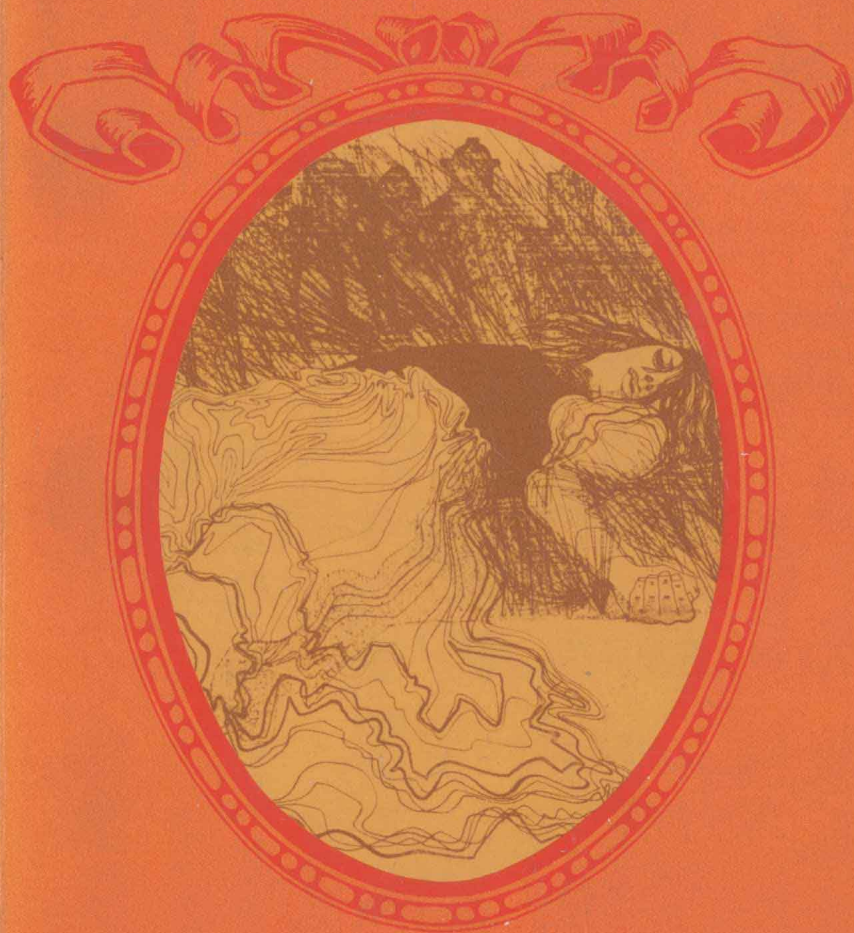


# I'll Tell You a Tale

Ian Serraillier

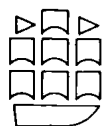


A collection of **POEMS**  
and **BALLADS**

# **I'll Tell You a Tale**

**A collection of poems  
and ballads**

**Ian Serraillier**



**Longman**

Longman Group Limited  
London

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throughout the world*

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\* means that a word is explained in the glossary.

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# Section 1



## WALY, WALY

The water is wide, I cannot cross,  
And neither have I wings to fly.  
Bring me a boat that will carry two,  
And we shall row, my love and I.

O down in the field the other day,  
When gathering flowers bright and gay,  
When gathering flowers red and blue,  
I little thought what love could do.

I put my hand into a bush,  
Thinking the fairest flower to find.  
I pricked my finger right to the bone  
And left the fairest flower behind.

I leaned my back against an oak,  
Thinking it was a trusty tree;  
But first it bent and then it broke,  
And so did my first love to me.

There is a ship that sails the sea,  
She's loaded deep as deep can be,  
But not so deep as the love I'm in;  
I do not know if I sink or swim.

O love is handsome and love is grand,  
And love's a jewel when it is new;  
But when it's old it is growing cold,  
And fades away like morning dew.





## THE BIRCH TREE AND THE WILD ROSE

1

Lord Thomas and Fair Annet  
Sat all day on a hill;  
When sun had set and night had come,  
They were talking still.

Lord Thomas said a word in fun  
Fair Annet did not like:  
'Unless my friends are pleased with her,  
I'll never marry a wife.'

'If you will never marry a wife,  
No wife will marry you.'  
Lord Thomas went to his mother then,  
And knelt upon his knee.

'Tell me, tell me, mother,' he said,  
'O what am I to do?  
Shall I take the brown girl  
And let Fair Annet go?'

'The brown girl has land and gold,  
Fair Annet has got none;  
The beauty that Fair Annet has,  
O it will soon be gone!'

Lord Thomas went to his sister then:  
'O what am I to do?  
Shall I take the brown girl  
And let Fair Annet go?'

'You should take Fair Annet, Thomas,  
And leave the other alone;  
Or one day you may cry, "Alas!  
What's this that I brought home?"'

'No, I'll do as my mother says,  
I'll do as she has planned,  
And I will take the brown girl;  
Fair Annet can leave the land.'

2

Fair Annet's father was out of bed  
Before the break of day;  
He went into the next room  
Where Fair Annet lay.

'Get up, get up, Fair Annet,' he said,  
'Put on your silken dress!  
We must go to St Mary's Church,  
The wedding not to miss.'

'My maids, go to my dressing-room,  
And comb my yellow hair.  
It shone before, now let it shine  
Twenty times as fair.'

The horse Fair Annet rode upon  
Was easy as the wind;  
It wore silver shoes in front,  
And golden shoes behind.

Four-and-twenty silver bells  
Were tied to its \*mane;  
The wind blew, the bells rang  
Again and yet again.

Four-and-twenty gallant knights  
Rode at Fair Annet's side,  
And four-and-twenty ladies gay,  
As if she were a bride.

3

When she came to St Mary's Church,  
She sat down on a chair;  
And all the people at the wedding  
Turned their heads to stare.

When she walked along the church,  
She sparkled like the sun;  
The belt that was around her waist  
With pretty pearls was strung.

She sat down by the brown girl,  
Her eyes so blue and clear;  
Lord Thomas clean forgot the bride  
When Fair Annet came near.

He had a rose in his hand;  
He gave it kisses three,  
And, reaching past the bride, laid it  
On Fair Annet's knee.

The brown girl sprang up and said,  
In jealousy and spite:  
'Where did you get the rose-water  
That makes your skin so white?'

'I got all my rose-water  
Where you will find none;  
I got all my rose-water  
In my mother's \*womb.'

The bride drew a long pin  
From her brown hair,  
And struck Fair Annet to the heart;  
Fair Annet spoke no more.

Lord Thomas saw her pale face—  
O it was pale and sad!—  
But when he saw her heart's blood,  
He was raging mad.

He drew his knife that was so sharp,  
That was so sharp and neat,  
And drove it into the brown girl—  
She fell dead at his feet.

'Now wait for me, Fair Annet, dear,  
Now wait for me!' he cried;  
Then struck the knife into his heart,  
And fell dead at her side.

4

They buried him outside the church,  
Where now a birch tree grows;  
She lies inside, and from her tomb  
Springs a wild rose.

The tree and rose grew and grew,  
They wanted to be near;  
For Lord Thomas and Fair Annet  
Were two lovers dear.

## KISS ME NOW

Kiss me now,  
Kiss me cunning,  
Kiss me quick,  
Mother's coming.





# HAIKU

Alone I cling to  
The freezing mountain and see  
White cloud—below me.

