

52 THE LOST HEART

One golden, summer day,
Along the forest-way,
Young Colin passed with blithesome steps alert.

His locks with careless grace
Rimmed round his handsome face
And drifted outward in the airy surge.

So blithe of heart was he,
He hummed a melody,
And all the birds were hushed to hear him sing.

Across his shoulders flung
His bow and baldric hung:
So, in true huntsman's guise, he threads the wood.

The sun mounts up the sky,
The air moves sluggishly,
And reeks with summer heat in every pore.

His limbs begin to tire,
Slumbers his youthful fire;
He sinks upon a violet-bed to rest.

The soft winds go and come
With low and drowsy hum,
And ope for him the ivory gate of dreams.

Beneath the forest-shade
There trips a woodland maid,
And marks with startled eye the sleeping youth.

At first she thought to fly,
Then, timid, drawing nigh,
She gazed in wonder on his fair young face.

When swiftly stopping down
Upon his locks so brown
She lightly pressed her lips, and blushing fled.

When Colin woke from sleep,
From slumbers calm and deep,
He felt -- he knew not how -- his heart had flown.

And so, with anxious care,
He wandered here and there,
But could not find his lost heart anywhere.

Then he, with air distraught,
And brow of anxious thought,
Went out into the world beyond the wood.

Of each that passed him by,
He queried anxiously,
"I prithee, has thou seen a heart astray?"

Some stared and hurried on,
While others said in scorn,
"Your heart has gone in search of your lost wits."

The day is wearing fast,
Young Colin comes at last
To where a cottage stood embowered in trees.

He looks within, and there
He sees a maiden fair,
Who sings low songs the while she plies her wheel.

"I prithee, maiden bright," --
She turns as quick as light,
And straight a warm flush crimson all her face.

She, much abashed, looks down,
For on his locks so brown
She seems to see the marks her lips have made.

Whereby she stands confest;
What need to tell the rest?
He said, "I think, fair maid, you have my heart.

"Nay, do not give it back,
I shall not feel the lack,
If thou wilt give to me thine own therefor."

Sources:

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