

Allison Gross (traditional)

When I removed the strongly syncopated beat & heavy electronic accompaniment from the tune Steeleye Span uses, I noticed the similarity to the tune of "Down in Yon Forest" from the Oxford Book of Carols. I went back to Child (ballad #35) for the words.

Allison Gross, that lives in yon tower
The ugliest witch in the North Country
Trysted me one day up to her bower
And many fine speeches she made to me

She stroked my head and she combed my hair
She set me down softly upon her knee
Said: "If you will be my lover so true,
So many fine things I would give to thee."

She showed me a mantle of red scarlet
With golden flowers and fringes fine
Said: "If you will be my lover so true,
This goodly gift it shall be thine."

Away, away you ugly witch
Go far away and let me be
I never will be your lover so true
And I wish I were out of your company

She next brought a shirt of the softest silk
Well wrought with pearls all about the band.
Said: "If you will be my own true love,
This goodly gift you shall command."

She showed me a cup of the good red gold
Well set with jewels so fair to see
Said: "If you will be my lover so true,
This goodly gift I will give to thee."

Away, away you ugly witch
Go far away and let me be,

I never will kiss your ugly mouth
For all of the gifts you can give to me.

She's turned her right and round about
Three times she blew on a grass green horn
She swore by the moon and the stars up above
That she would make me rue the day that I was born

And out she has taken a silver wand
She's turned her three times round and round
She muttered such words that my strength it did fail
And I fell down senseless upon the ground

She changed me into an ugly worm
Made me toddle about the tree
And ever since then, every Saturday night
My own sister Maisry, comes to me

With a silver basin and silver comb
To comb my heady upon her knee
But sooner than kiss that ugly mouth
I'd much rather toddle about the tree

And then as it happened, last Halloween
The fairy court was riding by
The queen lighted down on the gowany bank
Not far from the tree where I did lie

She picked me up in her milk white hand
She stroked me gently across her knee
She changed me back into my own proper shape
And no more need I toddle about the tree.

From Judy Cook's CD "If You Sing Songs..."

Contact Judy for CDs, Tapes, Bookings, or Information.

Email: judy@judycook.net Phone: (301)776-4314 Website: www.judycook.net

Judy Cook / 16125 Malcolm Drive / Laurel, MD 20707 / USA