

## CHILD WATERS (traditional Scotland)

*Child Waters is the name of the hero in the earliest version of this Scottish ballad printed in the mid 1700's. Professor Child (no relation) included it as #63 in his collection and thought it one of the best of the ballads he found.*

Lord William stood at his stable door  
Says, "I'll away and ride."  
Lady Margaret stood at her bower  
door  
Says, "I'll go by your side."

He mounted on his high horse back  
And fast away rode he  
"If you would go with me," he says,  
"My horse boy you must be."

So he rode and so she ran  
And she ran by his side  
Until they came to the river bank  
That all men call the Clyde

He rode in, she waded in  
Till the water's to her knee  
And sighing said this fair lady,  
"This wading's not for me."

He rode in, she waded in  
Till the water's to her pap  
And the babe that lay between her  
sides  
With cold his chin did crack.

"Lie still, lie still my bonnie babe  
I'm wading to my chin.  
Your father high upon horseback  
Cares not if we sink or swim."

But in the middle of Clyde's water  
There stands a steadfast stone.  
He's turned his horse's head about  
And taken his lady on.

"Ride on, ride on my lady gay  
You see not what I see,  
For yonder stands my father's hall  
A little beyond the lea."

There were four & twenty ladies fair  
Stood together on the green  
But a fairer one than all of them  
Took Willie's horse from him.

There were four & twenty ladies gay  
Sat together at the meat.  
Lady Margaret sat at a by-table  
But O she could not eat.

Up and spoke Lord Willie's mother  
And a wise woman was she.  
"You have brought home a new foot  
page  
His like I ne'er did see."

"Sometimes his color waxes red  
Sometimes it waxes wan.  
He's more like a woman with child  
Than any waiting man."

"Get up, get up my bonnie boy  
My bidding for to do.  
Give grain and water to my steed  
And see he's bedded down."

Slowly, slowly she got up  
And slowly she put on  
And slowly she's gone down the stair  
Making heavy moan.

And slowly she's gone to the stable  
door  
And slowly she's gone in.  
And there between his horse's feet  
She's borne her dear wee son.

Now Willie's mother being in bed  
And lying all alone,  
She thought she heard a baby cry  
And a woman's weary moan.

"Get up, get up, O Willie," she cried  
"And keep us all from harm.  
You might have chosen a lighter  
serving boy  
Than a woman big with child."

There were fifteen steps all in the  
stair  
He's taken them all in three.  
And he's to the stable gone in haste  
To see his gay lady.

He's hit the door then with his foot  
So did he with his knee  
Till doors of deal and locks of steel  
In splinters he made fly.

"It's asking, asking of you Willie  
Asking you'll grant me  
The poorest bower in all your hall  
For my young son and me."

"Your asking's not so great Margaret  
But granted it shall be  
The very best bower in all my hall  
For my young son and thee."

"And I'll take up by bonnie wee son  
And I'll wash him in the milk  
And I'll take up my lady gay  
And clothe her all in silk."

"And cheer your heart my fair  
Margaret  
For be it as it may,  
Your churching and your fair  
wedding  
Shall both be on one day."

*Scottish ballad singer, Gordeanna McCulloch gave me this song at the 1997 Whitby Festival. She sang it as "Lord William and Lady Margaret" on Folk Songs of North-East Scotland; Songs from the Greig-Duncan Collection put out by Greentrax Recordings.*

**From Judy Cook's CD "Far From The Lowlands"**

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