

The Farndale Hob

She left skim-milk in the jug –
Now that was over hasty –
And I was used to clotted cream.
That's when I turned nasty.

I came the day when poor Ralph died,
Who used to shear and mow:
They found him on the open moor
Beneath a drift of snow,

And that same night I set to work
To thresh the harvest corn,
And year on year, no one dared
To laugh my work to scorn.

I drove the oxen in a team,
Sheared sheep and hauled the hay
For a daily jug of cream –
And generations passed away.

She claimed that cream was luxury
And times were getting hard:
I took one taste and spat it out,
And screaming through the yard,

I turned the milk-churns over,
I made the butter spatter,
I filled the early hours with
A grim unholy clatter,

I banged the copper kettle,
I haunted all her dreams;
I ripped off her bedclothes
With heart-rending screams.

She thinks she can escape from me
By moving down the street,
But I will patter after her
On little hobnailed feet:

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Now that was over hasty –
And I was used to clotted cream.
That's when I turned nasty.

Lyric by Giles Watson, 2013. Based on a story recorded by H.L. Gee, *Folk Tales of Yorkshire*, London, 1952, pp. 17-22.