

John Barleycorn

1. Oh there were three men came out of the west
Their fortunes for to try,
And these three men made a solemn vow:
John Barleycorn should die.
They ploughed, they sowed, they harrowed him in,
Threw clods upon his head.
Then these three men made a solemn vow:
John Barleycorn was dead.

2. They let him lie for a very long time
Till the rain from heaven did fall.
Then little John he raised up his head
And he soon amazed them all.
They let him lie till the long midsummer
Till he looked both pale and wan.
Then little John grew a long, long beard
And so became a man.

3. They hired men with the scythes so sharp
To cut him off down by the knee.
They rolled him and tied him around by the waist,
Served him most barbarously.
They hired men with the sharp pitchforks
Who pierced him to the heart.
But the loader, he served him far worse than that
For he bound him to the cart.

4. They rode him around and around the field
Till they came into a barn,
And there they made a solemn mow
Of poor John Barleycorn.
They hired men with the crab-tree sticks
Who cut him skin from bone
But the miller, he served him far worse than that
For he ground him between two stones.

5. Here's little John in the nut-brown bowl
And brandy in a glass.
And little John in the nut-brown bowl
Proved the stronger man at last.
For the hunter, he can't hunt the fox
Nor so loudly blow his horn,
And the tinker, he can't mend his kettles or his pots
Without a little bit of John Barleycorn.