

Blood on the Snow
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released online 24th December 2014
audio recording available at www.soundcloud.com/helgurney

The stars glitter bright as the village lies dreaming
The High Queen of Winter is calling her court
From hills and from valleys the spirits come streaming
From echoes and rivers and gems dearly bought

From cobwebs and owls' wings and ice-bitten flowers
The Fair Folk are summoned by sovereign song.
Night sucked up the sun and grew fat on its hours
And now Winter swells as the nights come on long.

The Gentry are sounding their horns in the clearing
Where the Huntress is holding the moon in her jaws
The horns' howls grow loud as the riders come nearing
The place where all bow to the Lady's old laws.

Their aspects are fair and their voices are keening
Their eyes burn as bright as the rubies they wear
But beastly and proud they go prowling and preening
And woe to the mortals who might linger there.

Beware of the Fair Folk, whose footfalls land lightly
Beware of the paths where the woodsmen won't go
For there in the clearing the Queen holds court nightly
With girls in red dresses and blood on the snow.

For here are the Shining Ones, here are their revels,
Their fruit and their wine and their dark dripping meat,
And down in the village it's said they are devils
But here in the forest their reign is complete.

Wild as the wind will the hunters go racing
And fleet as a fox is each frosty-tongued hound
And sorry indeed is the quarry they're chasing
For the woods are not kind when a man goes to ground.

On shadow-shod horses the Fair Ones come riding
They whirl through the streets while good Christian folk sleep
And one who might spy them would know bitter tiding
For the whips and the spurs of the Wild Hunt cut deep.

Beware of the Fair Folk, who snatch babies screaming
Beware of the changelings they leave in their stead
For down in the village a young girl lies dreaming
Of blood-spattered snow and a gown crimson red

She every dusk hears the elven bells ringing
She dreams each night of the queen's freezing kiss
She in her slumber hears her people singing
And she wakes in the moonlight and shivers with bliss.

Beware of the Fair Folk, beware of their loathing,
Beware of their freedom, their cruelty, their love,
Beware of their traps hid in promises' clothing,
In the merciless glare of the cold stars above.

Beware of the girl, when the Fair Folk come reaping
Their call growing stronger until she must go
But for now, with her secrets the maiden lies sleeping
And dreams of red dresses and blood on the snow.