

A Riddle Wittily Expounded

Riddles wisely expounded

Trad (D'Urfey, 1719-20, IV, pp.129-32 (emended))

There was a La - dy in the North Coun - - try, Lay the
Bent to the Bon - - ny Broom, And she had
love - - ly Daugh - ters three, Fa la la la, fa, la la la re.

There was a Lady in the North-Country,
Lay the Bent to the Bonny Broom,
And she had lovely Daughters three,
Fa, la la la, fa, la la la re.

There was a Knight of Noble worth,
Which also lived in the North,

The Knight of Courage stout and brave,
A Wife he did desire to have,

He knocked at the Lady's Gate,
One Evening when it was late,

The youngest Sister let him in,
And pinn'd the Door with a Silver Pin,

The second Sister she made his Bed,
And laid soft Pillows under his Head,

The Youngest [Sister] that same Night,
She went to Bed to this young Knight,

And in the Morning when it was Day,
These word unto him she did say,

Now you have had your Will (quoth she),
I pray Sir Knight you Marry me,

The young brave Knight to her reply'd,
Thy Suit, fair Maid shall not be deny'd,

If thou can'st answer me Questions three,
This very Day I will Marry thee,

Kind Sir in Love, O then quoth she,
Tell me what your three Questions be,

O, what is longer than the Way?
Or what is deeper than the Sea?

Or what is louder than a Horn?
Or what is sharper than a Thorn?

Or what is greener than the Grass?
Or what is worse than a Woman was?

(The Damsel's Answer to the Three Questions)

O Love is longer than the Way,
And Hell is deeper than the Sea,

And Thunder's louder than the Horn,
And Hunger's sharper than the Thorn,

And Poyson's greener than the Grass,
And the Devil's worse than a Woman was,

When she these Questions answered had,
The Knight became exceeding glad,

And having truly tried her Wit,
He much commended her for it,

And after as 'tis verified,
He made of her his lovely Bride,

So now fair Maidens all Adieu,
This Song I dedicate to you,

I wish that you may Constant prove,
Unto the Man that you do love.