

Anais Mitchell

"Shepherd"

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Said the shepherd to his wife
'The crop of hay is cut and dried
I'll bale it up and bring it in
Before the coming storm begins'
'Go' she said 'and beat the storm
And then there is another chore
Today the baby will be born
You'll take me to the hospital'
Said the shepherd 'if it's true
Twere better if I stayed with you
I'd rather let the harvest go
And hasten to the hospital'
'Nay' she told him 'I'll be fine
We both have laboring to do
You do yours and I'll do mine
And the babe will wait till the work is thru'

The shepherd rode the yellow rows
The clouds above and the fields below
Until the bales had all been tied
Then homeward turned to find his wife
The sweat was wet upon her brow
Her breath it cameth laboredly
And then the rain was coming down
Upon the fields of yellow hay
Said the shepherd, 'it's no use
The rain will surely win the race
Twere better if we let it fall
And hurry to the hospital'
'Go' she said 'and work with haste
And bring the bales into the barn
Else the crop will go to waste
And the babe will wait till the work is done'

The shepherd drove into the storm
And to and from the yellow barn
Till half the bales were safely in
Then went to find his wife again
How many times her name he called
And no replying would she make
Her breath it cameth not at all

She would not rise from where she lay

The storm was o'er within the hour
The shepherd saw the sun come out
The shepherd's wife saw ne'er again
He buried her and the babe within
He turned the seed into the ground
He brought the flock to feed thereon
He held the cleaver and the plow
And the shepherd's work was never done

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