

The Imagined Village "John Barleycorn"

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There were three men come from the West
Their fortunes for to try,
And these three men a solemn vow:
"John Barleycorn must die."

They plowed, they sowed, they harrowed him in,
Threw clods upon his head,
And these three men were made a solemn vow
John Barleycorn was dead.

They let him lie for a very long time,
'Til the rains from heaven did fall,
When little Sir John raised up his head
And so amazed them all.

They let him stand 'til Mid-Summer's Day
When he looked both pale and wan;
Then little Sir John grew a long, long beard
And so became a man.

They hired men with their scythes so sharp
To cut him off at the knee;
They rolled him and tied him around the waist,
And served him barbarously.

They hired men with their sharp pitchforks
To pierce him to the heart,
But the loader did serve him worse than that,
For he bound him to the cart.

They wheeled him 'round and around the field
'Til they came unto a barn,
And there they took a solemn oath
On poor John Barleycorn.

They hired men with their crab-tree sticks
To split him skin from bone,
But the miller did serve him worse than that,
For he ground him between two stones.

There's little Sir John in the nut-brown bowl,
And there's brandy in the glass,

And little Sir John in the nut-brown bowl
Proved the strongest man at last.

The huntsman cannot hunt the fox
Nor loudly blow his horn
And the tinker cannot mend his pots
Without John Barleycorn.

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