

Al Stewart

"A Long Way Down From Stephanie"

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Maid, truly I see now it must be a long way down
And with love's bud shorn
Now must all dalliance hither crumble and wither [1]
Oh strange, methought it strange
Thou couldst deprive me of my crown [2]
And my freedom that thou cast upon me as
Litter bears fruit of bitter strain [3]

And I would go forsooth to the dragon's tooth [4]
If thus a chance were gained
To resurrect that part of your wanton heart
To whose grave my own is chained

And hold, ere thou dost go
Were not thy moments gilded too
And in honesty didst thou not measure for measure
Countenance pleasure
Cold were't thou so cold
This in thy mind be frozen too

And will not Spring be reborn
But might the sun thaw the frost here
That all be not lost herein

And I would rather, Zounds! [5]
It were hell's own hounds
Whose foul breath upon my face
Did portent my doom, than to bear the gloom
Of a world stripped of thy grace

And so in truth I know
Yes it will be a long way down
And if go thou must, ere we should meet accidental
Prithee be gentle [6]
And though distant now
Perchance the hand of time may soothe
And though lost at six, if I should live to be seven [7]
I might forget Stephanie

Notes:

- [1] Dalliance: staying around, wasting time
- [2] The words 'thou' and 'thee' in this song are the equivalent of current French 'tu' and German 'du' - the familiar form of address which has now died out in English in favour of the universal 'you.'
- [3]The album cover has 'litter' although 'linden' seems to be heard on the record. Linden is an old word a tree of family Tiliaceae, e.g. the lime or basswood, although 'litter' does rhyme with and contrast with 'bitter.'
- [4] Forsooth: truly, or in truth (Old English)
- [5] Zounds: "God's wounds!" - old expletive
- [6] Prithee: pray thee = please.
- [7] The payoff: at the end of the song we discover that this is a junior school romance...

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