

## **Richard Thompson**

### **"Tam Lin"**

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I forbid you maidens all that wear gold in your hair  
To travel to Carter Hall for young Tam Lin is there

None that go by Carter Hall but they leave him a pledge  
Either their mantles of green or else their maidenhead"

Janet tied her kirtle green a bit above her knee  
And she's gone to Carter Hall as fast as go can she

She'd not pulled a double rose, a rose but only two  
When up there came young Tam Lin says "Lady, pull no  
more"

"And why come you to Carter Hall without command  
from me?"

"I'll come and go", young Janet said, "and ask no leave  
of thee"

Janet tied her kirtle green a bit above her knee  
And she's gone to her father as fast as go can she

Well, up then spoke her father dear and he spoke meek  
and mild  
"Oh, and alas, Janet," he said, "I think you go with  
child"

"Well, if that be so," Janet said, "myself shall bear the  
blame

There's not a knight in all your hall shall get the baby's  
name

For if my love were an earthly knight as he is an elfin  
grey  
I'd not change my own true love for any knight you  
have"

Janet tied her kirtle green a bit above her knee  
And she's gone to Carter Hall as fast as go can she

"Oh, tell to me, Tam Lin," she said, "why came you  
here to dwell?"

"The Queen of Faeries caught me when from my horse

I fell

And at the end of seven years she pays a tithe to hell  
I so fair and full of flesh and feared it be myself

But tonight is Hallowe'en and the faery folk ride  
Those that would their true love win at Miles Cross they  
must buy

So first let past the horses black and then let past the  
brown  
Quickly run to the white steed and pull the rider down

For I'll ride on the white steed, the nearest to the town  
For I was an earthly knight, they give me that renown

Oh, they will turn me in your arms to a newt or a snake  
But hold me tight and fear not, I am your baby's father

And they will turn me in your arms into a lion bold  
But hold me tight and fear not and you will love your  
child

And they will turn me in your arms into a naked knight  
But cloak me in your mantle and keep me out of sight"

In the middle of the night she heard the bridle ring  
She heeded what he did say and young Tam Lin did  
win

Then up spoke the Faery Queen, an angry queen was  
she  
Woe betide her ?ill-fought? face, an ill death may she  
die

"Oh, had I known, Tam Lin," she said, "what this knight  
I did see  
I have looked him in the eyes and turned him to a tree

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