

## The Mad Merry Pranks of Robin Goodfellow

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From Oberon in fairyland, /the king of ghosts and shadows there,  
Mad Robbin, I, at his command, /am sent to view the night sports here:  
What revel rout /Is kept about,  
In every corner where I go,  
I'll o'er see, /And merry be,  
And make good sport with ho, ho, ho!

More swift than lightening can I fly, /and round this airy welkin [heaven] soon,  
And, in a minute's space, espy /each thing that's done beneath the moon;  
There's not a hag /Nor ghost shall wag,  
Nor cry "goblin!" where I go,  
But Robin, I, /Their feats will spy,  
And fear them home with ho, ho, ho!

If any wanderers I meet /that from their night-sports do trudge home,  
With counterfeiting voice I greet /and cause them on with me to roam,  
Through woods, through lakes, /Through bogs, though brakes,  
O'er bush and brier with them I go;  
I call upon /Them to come on,  
And wend me, laughing ho, ho, ho!

Sometimes I meet them like a man; /sometimes an ox, sometimes a hound;  
And to a horse I turn me can, /to trip and trot about them round.  
But if to ride /My back they stride,  
More swift than wind away I go;  
O'er hedge and lands, /Through pools and ponds,  
I whirry, laughing, ho, ho, ho!

When lads and lasses merry be /With possets [mulled drink] and with banquet's fine,  
Unseen of all the company, /I eat their cakes and sip their wine;  
And to make sport, /I fart and snort,  
And out the candles I do blow;  
The maids I kiss, /They shriek, "Who's this?"  
I answer nought, but ho, ho, ho!

Yet now and then, the maids to please, /I card at midnight up their wool:  
And while they sleep, snort, fart and fease, [poop]/with wheel to threads their flax I pull:  
I grind at mill /Their malt up still,  
I dress their hemp, I spin their tow;  
If any wake, /And would me take,  
I wend me, laughing, ho, ho, ho!

When house or hearth doth dirty lie, /I pinch the maids there black and blue;  
And, from the bed, the bed-clothes I /pull off, and lay them nak'd to view:  
twixt sleep and wake /I do them take,  
And on the key-cold floor them throw;

If out they cry,/Then forth fly I,  
And loudly laugh I, ho, ho, ho!

When any need to borrow ought, /we lend them what they do require;  
And for the use demand we nought, /our own is all we do desire:  
If to repay /They do delay,  
Abroad amongst them then I go,  
And night by night /I them affright,  
With pinching, dreams, and ho, ho, ho!

When lazy queens have nought to do /but study how to cogge [cheat] and lie,  
To make debate, and mischief too, /twixt one another secret-ly:  
I mark their gloss, [exaggerations] /And do disclose  
To them that they had wronged so;  
When I have done, /I get me gone,  
And leave them scolding, ho, ho, ho!

When men do traps and engines set /in loop-holes, where the vermin creep,  
That from their folds and houses fet [steal] /their ducks and geese, their lambs and sheep:  
I spy the 'gin,/And enter in,  
And seems a vermin taken so,  
But when they there /Approach me near,  
I leap out, laughing, ho, ho, ho!

By wells and gils [rivulets] in meadows green, /we nightly dance our hedegies [rustic dance],  
And to our fairy King and Queen /we chant our moon-light harmonies.  
When larks 'gain sing, /Away we fling;  
And babes new born steal as we go;  
An elf in bed /We leave instead,  
And wend us, laughing, ho, ho, ho!

From hag-bred Merlin's time have I /thus nightly revel'd to and fro:  
And, for my pranks, men call me by /the name of Robin Good-fellow:  
Fiends, ghosts, and sprites /That haunt the nights,  
The hags and goblins do me know,  
And beldames old, /My feats have told,  
So Vale, Vale, ho, ho, ho!

Finis.