

Johnny Sangster

Greig-Duncan 407

Emma sings this Aberdeenshire harvest song, attributed to William Scott of Fetterangus, born in 1785. It is an unusual Bothy Ballad, in that it is written from the woman's viewpoint.

O aa the seasons o the year that we maun work the sairest
The harvest is the foremost time an yet it is the rarest
We rise as seen as mornin licht, nae craters could be blyther
We buckle on oor finger steels an follae oot the scyther

*For you Johnny, you Johnny,
You ma Johnny Sangster
I'll trim the gaivel o my sheaf
For you're the gallant bandster*

A mornin piece tae line oor cheek, afore that we gae further
Wi clouds o blue tobacco reek we then set oot in order
The sheafs are risin thick and fast, an Johnny he maun bind them
The busy crew for fear they stick, can scarcely look ahin them

I'll gae ye bands that winna slip, I'll pleat them weel and thraw them
I'm sure they winna tine their grip, hooever weel ye draw them
I'll lay ma leg oot ower the sheaf an draw the band sae handy
We ilka straa as stracht's a rash an that'll be the dandy

If ere it chance tae be my lot, tae get a gallant bandster
I'll gar him wear a gentle coat an bring him gowd in handfu's
But Johnny he maun please himsel' for I wouldna wish him blinkit
But eence that he has brewed his ale, he maun sit doon an drink it

A dainty cowie in the byre for butter and for cheeses
A grumphy feedin in the stye wid keep the hoose in greases
A bonnie ewie in the bucht wid help tae creesh the ladle
And we'll get tufts o canny woo wid help tae theak the cradle

aa = all
ahin = behind
blinkit = bewitched
blyther = merrier
bucht = sheep-pen
canny woo = cosy wool
craters = creatures
creesh = grease
eence = once
follae = follow
gae = go, give
gaivel = end
gar = make, compel
gowd = gold
handfu's = handfuls
ilka = every
licht = light
maun = must
nae = no other
piece = bread, snack
rarest = best
reek = smoke
sairest = hardest
straa = straw
stracht's a rash = straight as a rush
theak = thatch, cover
thraw = twist
winna = will not