

## R.A. Briggs, "Diadem"

Our Holy Father says he knows  
true love doth presuppose  
how stags pursue their does  
and boys must marry girls.

Half-hearted, I have sought the hem  
of many a skirt at many a fete,  
and yet  
my wanton self uprose and chose  
to light in song upon this churl.

He flares, a flower on upright stem.  
He shimmers like Arachne's net  
when wet  
with dew. His sweet complexion glows  
like sunlit bloom upon the merle:

his cheek where wild currant grows,  
his eyes like blackthorn sloes,  
his mouth, that rarest rose,  
the thicket of his curls.

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true love doth presuppose  
how stags pursue their does  
and boys must marry girls.

He'll take me as his diadem  
as stars in firmament are set  
and let  
the silver of his arms enclose  
my body like a precious pearl.

O Father, let me be his gem,  
his sweet, his doll, his toy, his pet.  
My debt,  
though great, I shall discharge. Propose  
a breakback task; I shall not quarrel.

We sapling lads who plight our trows  
grow green where God bestows  
His grace, though blizzard blows  
and cruel tempests whirl.

Our Holy Father in heaven knows  
within our breasts repose  
all creatures: stags and does  
and gems and boys and girls.