

A Lovers Plight (or Meurig and Branwen)
A Welsh Awdl written in the form of a Cyhydedd fer

By Baroness Rainillt Leia de Bello Marisco

My persona is based around that of a 14th century granddaughter of a welsh bard, who's family, having lost the support of the welsh princes is now traveling the continent. As such, it would be natural I would try my hand at writing a poem or two.

The poem is an Awdl, in the form of Cyhydedd fer one of the formal 24 poetic forms of Welsh poetry, established by Einion Offeiriad , who wrote a book on welsh grammar between 1322-1330, a copy of which is at the University of Bangor in Wales and dates c c. 1400-1420. The cyhydedd fer form written using rhymed couplets of eight syllables.

The Awdl was a style of poetry that was romanticized throughout the history of welsh times. It was written to be epic in style, while still being based in history, singing the praises of its hero both real and mythological. It was dominant during the height of the reign of the welsh princes during the 12 and 13th centuries. Recited to harp much of the time, they were designed to make use of alliteration and the flow of the rhyme to create a piece more favorable for the listener than the reader.

In this particular poem, I made use of the general themes of the Awdl and present a tale of a legendary warrior and his lady love who are sent to fight demons threatening a city. As with most epic poetry it ends with a moral to the story with love conquering all.

A Lovers Plight (or Meurig and Branwen)
Welsh Awdl in the form of Cyhydedd fer

By Baroness Rainillt Leia de Bello Marisco

On this a most auspicious night,
The bards speak of a lover's plight.
A tale of wonder and suspense,
Of long ago, a time gone hence.

Meurig the brave, a hero true
A warrior knight, the old king's knew,
His legend spread from hill to hall,
His braveness greater than us all.

He roamed throughout the far off lands,
With fairest Branwen by his hand.
His quest to rid the land of fear,
His love did share these hopes so dear.

The King sent out a desperate plea,
To one and all for all to see
To Llynfell we bid one go with haste
Like the wind a swallow's pace

Tis, where our tale now doth take place,
To newfound foes our Knight would face.
For demon's they have risen there,
And taken o'er a city faire.

To Llynfell he road on through the night,
To save the city from its plight.
His lady Branwen she did ride
To be with Meurig by his side.

Our hero rode so brave and tall,
And came to free them one and all.
His strength, the greatest in the land,
His shield on arm and sword in hand.

His tactics should have won the day,
But fates' dark hand did change the way.
The demons they did capture there,
His love, Branwen, his lady faire.

They took her to their inner court,
For torment was their ancient sport.
A hostage they now had in hand,
To use to sway the battle planned.

In battle grim that otherwise,
Meurig to glory would arise.
A choice he had to make right there,
His hearts' love or the city faire.

A choice no knight should have to make,
For life and love his heart did ache.
No time to think or plot his fate,
For they held Branwen up for bait.

Sweet Branwen, love of Meurig true,
Went out to meet her death she knew.
"Her life for yours" the demon's cried,
and held her tightly by their side.

Meurig he knew the choice to make,
The demons wished his blood to slake.
His helm he laid upon the ground,
Beside his mighty shield so round.

His sword to demons he did yield,
And there at once his fate was sealed.
Spare her, my love, my darling true,
I give my life this day to you.

This battle you have won today,
I cannot win the war this way.
Just grant me one last favor please,
Before you take my life with ease.

Let me kiss my love, my life,
Who is my dearest wedded wife.
The demons nodded to this last wish,
To Meurig granted one last kiss.

Branwen then gave a heartfelt sigh
And gazed into his tear filled eyes.
Upon his brow her lips did dwell,
And kissed her love a kiss farewell.

The demons cheered in jubilee,
A battle won they now did see.
For on the air they did now smell,
The chance to see this man in hell.

But something happened there that day,
A miracle true some do say.
The demons they grew weaker now
Their powers waned they knew not how.

The lovers stood together true,
Invincible as they now knew.
The demons knew their time was gone,
On earth no more for demon spawn.

They screamed in pain, a silent roar,
And disappeared forever more.
The lovers true had broke the thrall,
The city saved, for one and all.

The moral of the tale is this,
The power of a simple kiss.
Love conquers all, of this I know,
Witness this day and it will show.

The fate you ask of lovers true,
Who with a kiss doth evil slew,
Meurig travels throughout the land
With fairest Branwen by his hand.

Bibliography

A History of Wales, John Davies,
Penguin, USA, Reprint edition 1995
ISBN : 0140145818

A Guide to Welsh Literature – volume 2 , Edited by A.O.H. Jarman and G. Rees Hughes
University of Wales Press, 1997
ISBN : 0708314392

Gwenllian's Poetry Primer
<http://www.cybercom.net/~klb/primer.html>