

# THE BALLAD OF PENDLE HILL

*In thirteen parts*

## PART ONE

Old Pendle Hill standeth alone  
Twyx fortress Clitheroe  
& Burnley vale, heart of a tale  
We all may come to know

She broods deep in the misty north  
So sheer & solemn piled  
Midst hoar & spacious moorland wastes  
& woodland thick & wild

Wide-scattered all around her rim  
Lie villages & farms  
Whose folk, in gales, huddle round tales  
Of curses, spells & charms

& often muse & mediate  
Upon the chimes of life,  
As witches do, when slicing through  
A rabbit with a knife

Of these fell crones I'll tell my tale;  
Five hundred years ago  
Pendle forest was loveliest  
Twyx Colne & Clitheroe

Whose hill rises majestic'ly  
Oer wooded hunting ground  
Where wolf & boar all howl & roar  
In terrifying sound

For this is where the Boggart dwells  
To feed on living souls  
Dragging its pray that too close stray  
About its hidden holes

Let us espy a painted eye  
Perch'd high upon a church  
Protection from all 'things' that come  
From Hell with sordid lurch

It stands in Newchurch whose bells ring  
For our Blessed Lady,  
Whose spire commands the local lands  
For Him & His glory

Outside its doors waits young Demdike  
Squatting 'neath matted hair  
The sermon ends, she calls all, "*Friends,*"  
Yet not one penny spare

She scatters curses under breath  
Forging faerie power  
& scampers back along the track  
Toward black Malkin Tower

She caught her breath at Faugh's quarry  
Hewn from the sloping furze  
Where in the wistful morning mist  
An incident occurs

Behind a rock a boy steps out  
Clad in a sable coat  
& as they meet she sees his feet  
Are cloven as a goat

"*Give me yer soul,*" the Devil spat  
Demdike stood listening  
"*& for six years ye'll have no fears  
Nor want for anything.*"

The young witch thought a while or two,  
& consented after  
The demon sneers & disappears  
In a cloud of laughter

## PART TWO

Old Pendle is a misty place  
Beneath her whale back sheer  
Where dissipation saturates  
At all times of the year

Where mist sets thick & elf lights trick  
The mind at every turn  
& when winds wild often a child  
Will never home return

Now Demdike's begging bowl grown full  
& busy knocked her door  
For spells & alms & herbs & charms  
& blessings by the score

The lass has been the happiest  
Her meagre life has known  
Loving a man, strong handsome Stan,  
& them to marriage flown

Soon from their happy union  
A baby drew first breath  
O little star, *'Brightest by far,'*  
They named Elizabeth

But all good things come to an end  
As summer swings to snow  
We laugh & cry we live & die  
From high we must fall low

Full six long years of happiness  
Demdike has joyful known -  
Beside a stream her happy dream  
Is by a brown dog blown

*"I have come to collect thy soul,"*  
The Devil gently said  
So with a sigh & teary eye  
On heather Demdike led

& let the dog suckle her vein  
Until the day grew dark  
Its serpent tongue lapp'd deep & long  
& left a bloody mark

*"I am the Devil,"* said the Dog,  
*"& all my powers thine,*  
*For as they live aid shall I give*  
*To all those that are mine,*

*So if ye wish to summon me*  
*Just say my name three times*  
*Go Tibb! Tibb! Tibb! & rub yer rib*  
*& chant yer witchy rhymes*

*& I'll appear to aid ye lass*  
*Making true yer wishes!"*  
Then with a dash of sulphur flash  
The Devil vanishes

Soon Demdike has gone raving mad  
Her husband leaves his bride  
The world unjust, a new mistrust  
Spreads over Pendleside

*"That Demdike is a witch."* men say,  
*"& evil!"* say their wives,"  
Where once was calm from farm-to-farm  
Folk fearful of their lives

Now old horse-shoes & smooth-holed stones  
Fasten'd each nervous door  
Where suns & moons & other runes  
Are painted roof & floor

Where sage was burnt at every hearth  
To exercise the ghosts  
That round them range, in flaunting strange  
Unholy haunting hosts

*"Devil! Devil! I thee defy!"*  
Is whispered height & vale  
& prayers said before each bed  
As long as dragons tail

### PART THREE

Old Pendle is a savage place  
Sabden to Barley Fold  
Of rushing rills & rolling hills  
& damp north-facing mould

Where witchery finds natural  
Kinship in its coven  
Like old Chattox, decrepit fox  
Stoking Demdike's oven

*"As ye have yer familiar  
Today I met my own  
He hissed to me, 'call me Fancy,'  
& chilled me to the bone*

*He look'd just like a Christian man  
But Devil must he be  
I never saws no darker force  
In any humans ee!"*

Then in trotted a spotted dog  
& growl'd, sat black teeth bare,  
To hiss, *"I'll be yer ain Fancy!"*  
& fixed her with its stare

*"He'll need to suck a bit o blood,"  
Said Demdike, "Like my Tibb,"  
"I'll take my own," the dog did moan,  
"From just beneath a rib!"*

So Chattox lifted up her shirt  
& bares her wrinkly flab  
The Devil sinks its teeth & drinks  
Her blood into a scab

Thus beginneth the twilight time  
All thro that cursed vale  
Full fifteen years of haunted fears  
Where moonlit banshees wail

& murderesses murdering  
With human images  
& day-by-day crumbles the clay  
Their pins shall turn to dust

The first to die was Dick Baldwin  
For his crude abuses  
A rogue indeed, whose innate greed,  
Lizzie's wage refuses

Demdike shall fight her daughters cause  
Knocking at Dick's riches  
*"Get off my lands,"* the man commands,  
*"Ye foul whores & witches*

*Or I'll burn one, the other hang!"*  
The women fumed away  
Until, that night, by candlelight  
Out came those pots of clay

& after seven nights of pain  
Poor Baldwin had a stroke  
*"These are strange things,"* swept mutterings  
All thro the Pendle folk

Now Henry Milton of Roughlee  
Holds back just one penny  
Watching Demdike in hunger srike  
Tho that man had many

& he would die within a week,  
Pale torrential sweater  
*"Dead by disease,"* doctor agrees  
But Demdike knew better

## PART FOUR

Time swings unto our crucial year  
Sixteen hundred & twelve  
Where thick & crude the wiccan brood  
Into the darkness delve

Now old Demdike is eighty three  
Her daughter forty less  
Whose offspring three form family  
Midst Malkin Tower's mess

Liz call'd her eldest Alizon  
Who called her devil 'Ball'  
Tongue full of lies, uneven eyes  
& barely four foot tall

Next comes the wee & wiry James  
A dumb, precocious boy  
Whose sister's chest in dark incest  
His devilish lusts enjoy

& last there is little Jennet  
A very vicious thing  
Less human child more wolfen wild  
Or crow with broken wing

& what of Demdike's croney friends  
Chattox even older  
Who leaves West Close to wash her clothes  
In the river Calder

O half-blind hag, withered & spent  
Disfigured & deranged  
What nonsense slips thy chatt'ring lips  
Reality estranged

Two daughters has this crooning cow  
Their faces hard as stone  
Dour-faced Bessie, buck-toothed Annie  
& both just skin & bone

While Bessie was her mother's girl  
Her sister more did yearn  
So married Anne a broad-limb'd man  
& took the name Redfearn

The chatterbox that is Chattox  
Led Bessie out one night  
For local theft is better left  
To when there is no light

They broke in Malkin's fire house  
Old Demdike's stuff to steal  
Traucherous crime, steal clothes & lime  
& three bags of oatmeal

One week later Alizon bumped  
Into Bessie & hissed  
*"That coif is mine, nor is that thine,  
That band around thy wrist!"*

Bessie began to run away  
But... Alizon faster  
They raced & fought til thief was caught  
& dragged to Lancaster

There Roger Nowell, lord of Read  
Quite noble & astute  
Heard willowed wailings fill the jail  
So went to see its root

He found a filthy, foul-mouth'd lass  
From Pendle's nether edge  
For right or wrong her vengeance tongue  
Through old friends lives did dredge

She told him Demdike was a witch  
& Richard Baldwin slew  
& as he'd see, her family  
Was each a wiccan too

As Roger Nowell was full shrewd  
These fancies he dismissed  
Such words expected to deflect  
That coif from Bessie's wrist

& yet, as he rode home to Read  
His mind rang with discord  
Subconscious fears as horse rears  
From Ram sat in the road

As Roger stared into its eyes  
He felt its cold heart freeze  
Then with a snort the ram did sport  
Into the hoary trees

## PART FIVE

Old Pendle is a pagan place  
A little wild world where  
Superstitious whisp'ring witches  
Sing on the whistling air

This was a world of faerie lore  
All in the elfin grotts  
Where spirits roam from home-to-home  
Banging their copper pots

& so, my friends, the scene is set  
This story must be sung  
Of devil-swollen wiccan fall  
& how they all were hung

Now Alizon has reach'd Trawden  
To sell Rosemary pins  
& marks her pitch, this cackling witch,  
This carnal-house of sins

A pedlar by the name of Law  
Gave the pins perusal  
But turns them down, the witch did frown  
At his pert refusal

The pedlar shrugg'd & walk'd away,  
A black dog did appear  
An evil thing now whispering  
In Alizon's right ear

*"What would," it said, "ye have me do  
To take away thy shame?"  
"Hell's denizen", said Alizon,  
"Perhaps him ye would lame!"*

All in a flash of sulphur flame  
The pedlar hit the floor  
Then with a bark that dog so dark  
Went racing oer the moor

*"What have I done!"* gasp'd Alizon  
Her skin began to crawl  
Regret & guilt, deep to the hilt,  
Driven into her soul

& while Law twitch'd the sorry witch  
Ran to Malkin Tower  
Where Demdike hails these happy tales  
Of her daughter's power

& laugh'd as if a hound of hell  
Was howling in her core  
Her growling throat's blood-curl cut short  
By thudding at the door

Before them stood young Abraham  
The pedlar's angry son  
With shout & stare, out by the hair  
He dragg'd stunn'd Alizon

& chain'd her to his cattle cart  
Then drove her to Barlick  
Where weak abed his father led  
Speechless & very sick

*"Is this the lass,"* shouts Abraham  
*"Aye,"* said Law, *"that is she  
My body pricks with knives & sticks  
For this lass curses me!"*

Now Alizon confesses all  
Pleading for forgiveness -  
& Law was good & understood  
Parables of Jesus

& so forgive this weeping waif  
& kiss'd her tenderly  
Alas, his son, hiss'd, *"Alizon  
Ye'll not get off scot-free!"*

## PART SIX

Alizon reach'd the hall at Read  
Chain'd to Abraham's cart  
Who to his matey magistrate,  
Opens his weighty heart

As Roger Nowell heard the tale  
He knew the time had come  
To justice bring, to serve his king,  
& beat the bible-drum

He sent a host of riders out  
With orders to return  
At point of pike the damn'd Demdike  
Chattox & Anne Redfearn

Each one was brought to him at Fence  
Above the Burnley vale  
Where news flew fast, gossip aghast  
Spreading the deadly tale

This news soon rippled roundabout  
*"Foul witches are abroad!"*  
Even King James, hearing their names,  
Hissed, *"Put them to the sword!"*

Now Nowell shall interrogate  
His witches one-by-one  
Some threat-intending punishment  
Some promising pardon

Both Chattox & Demdike confess  
Wrong-doings lewd & long  
Incriminating each with hate  
That hate from twisted tongue

& Alizon, depress'd & dun  
Adds her own confession  
But Anne Redfern refused to turn  
From her non-admission

*"I need to find more witnesses,"*  
Did Roger Nowell say,  
*"So lock these hell-hounds in a cell  
& feed them once a day!"*

That cell was dark & stagnant dank  
Rats scuttling in the gloom  
A place to wait & ruminate  
Upon one's coming doom

As eyeball-to-blinking eyeball  
The witches stood & sat  
The atmosphere was stabb'd with sneer  
As conversation spat

Beyond those slimy walls the air  
Was cool & crisp & clear  
Upon the hoof, searching for proof  
Through Pendle men did steer

& convinc'd many witnesses  
They should not be afraid  
To speak the worst of coven cursed,  
Its witchery waylaid

Many a tale of fresh-spoilt ale  
& cattle dying strange  
Was ably told, both young & old  
Desiring times to change

& now the talk grew darker still  
Of murders vile & foul  
With eerie chill, from Pendle Hill  
There rose a grisly howl

& hurtled down the gushing stream  
That rush'd by Roughlee Hall  
To roar within, there tall & thin  
A lady heard its call

'Twas Alice Nutter, she had felt  
That frightful, demon-cry  
A wealthy lass, whose better class  
Beam'd from her noble eye

Alas she had grown curious  
Of witchcraft & its lore  
Of birds & bells & words & spells  
& circles on the floor

Her soul disturbed she rode her horse  
All thro the Pendle pine  
Urged wiccan friend good Friday spend  
In council clandestine

## PART SEVEN

Now sixteen epic centuries  
Since Jesus' final hour  
A coven stand, circled by hand  
In black Malkin's tower

For witches are the way things were  
When druids wandered free  
Before the Romans burnt their homes  
On holy Anglesey

In candlelight a lady stood  
Some prophet in the sands  
"Sisters", she said, "we daemon-wed  
Do what the Beast commands

*There is no pagan remedy  
To aid our captive friends,"*  
Alice imparts, "thus darker arts  
We witches must prepare!"

As spiders spin their silver webs  
& wolves will growl & croon  
Above the cats the busy bats  
Did spiral by the moon

They sacrificed a stolen sheep  
& drank its boiling blood  
Smearing crimson deftly upon  
Bare breasts as witches should

Little Jennet had watch'd this rite  
Some fifty times before  
Of how strange things with teeth & wings  
Come crawling through the floor

With arcane tongue the wiccan song  
Did thunder to the deep  
To touch the ear of something queer  
& rouse it from its sleep

Across the coven's cavern floor  
Crones chalk their pentacles  
Out of the runes & chalky dunes  
Crawl slimy tentacles

*"O devil, devil of the depths,"*  
They sang, "be bound to me  
From mortal chains, from awful pains  
Our friends we would set free!"

*"We demons rarely share the load  
In mankind's crude affairs  
But problem press'd, instead suggest  
Plans to appease thy prayers*

*First barrel up some gunpowder  
& cart it through the night  
To build a bale beside the jail  
& set the lot alight*

*& there the jailer he must die  
& happy he is dead  
Out through the hole made in the wall  
Your friends for freedom fled!"*

With seering flash of sulphur dash  
The daemon disappear'd  
Howl deafening - breaking the ring  
John Bulcock stroked his beard

*"I think the powder can be found,"*  
Said he, "Then we must haste,"  
Said Alice Nutter as she cut  
A vein of bloody taste

& offered it around the ring  
So all of them were bound  
Inside a spell, they suckled well  
Then huddle all around

*"We are one blood in sisterhood  
& as one live or die,  
Now all depends on saving friends  
Come sisters, let us fly!"*

## PART EIGHT

Now as the coven left their meet  
Some broomstick thro the air  
Some morph into a bird, a shrew  
& some a leaping hair

& as they went strange skirls of sound  
Woke the local slumber -  
Of kids singing & wild wailing  
Of cats in foul number

It was the very voice of hell,  
A childish caterwaul,  
& all who heard those cries averred  
*"The Devil wants us all!"*

The cry rang out three miles about;  
The farmers round Barley  
With dog & hawk & three pronged fork  
Defend their family

The rumours trickled out to Read  
Of that bastard Sabbath  
Of witchery & heresy  
& vengeful wiccan wrath

This was, for Nowell, final straw  
Who says *"Once & for all  
We shall arrest this evil nest  
Attesting to its fall*

*& I shall go personally  
Upon this justice ri,,e  
Bash sleeping heads in their ain beds  
So they can't up & hide!"*

Now Roger Nowell rides along  
Pendle to its big end  
& when mist clears brave volunteers  
Into the vale did send

Some down the slopes to Barley Fold  
& some to Moss End farm  
Tho' firm intent them worm-silent  
So not to raise alarm

From mouldy-heel'd Katherine Hewitt  
Thro Alice Grey of colne  
To John & Jane Bulcock that fane  
Of wiccan captives swoll'n

Across the grassy Sabden side  
Men mingled in patrol  
With pike & sword a Viking horde  
On Malkin Tower fall

From slumber James was rudely dragged  
& little Jennet too  
& sensing death Elizabeth  
Did join that wrecking crew

As slowly down to Roughlee hall  
Did Roger Nowell steer -  
Alice Nutter's dream sprite mutters  
*"Wake up!"* into her ear

*"Your summons rite,"* went on the sprite,  
*"Was ill & fitted wrong  
For you forgot to seal the knot  
With ill-begotten song!"*

*& thus the voice of hell rang out  
Upon a rotten breeze  
To rally Pendle's armed men  
Them come for thee to seize!"*

The lady rose out of her bed  
& lit her candle wick  
With sleepy care paced down the stair  
Clutching her candlestick

The lady dress'd in Sunday best  
A tear in hourglass eye  
& in their beds on sleeping heads  
She kissed her bairns goodbye

She stepp'd out underneath the stars  
That glistens on the rooves  
Then heard a host of horses coast  
& listened to their hooves

## PART NINE

Nowell reaches sleeping Roughlee  
& passes Crowtrees farm  
Beyond the rolling waterfall  
Of Calder's Pendle arm

& on to Nutter's sprawling hall  
Where he has found his foe  
Stood on the lawn, alone, forlorn  
Lit by the dawn's first glow

*"Alice Nutter of Roughlee Hall  
Thou art under arrest!"*  
With weary heart into a cart  
That noble lady pressed

She join'd her coven cramp'd inside  
That little cell at fence  
Despite their cries (those heinous lies)  
Protesting innocence

The witches spent a sleepless night  
& then, upon the dawn,  
By push & shout they were led out  
Into the blinking dawn

Where Roger Nowell sat ahorse  
As their lord & master  
Whose broad, stern chest addressed the nest  
*"March, we, to Lancaster!"*

It was a very humid day  
For witches old & frail  
& felt the worst when young uns burst  
Athirst upon the pale

& with old Demdike's thirst unquenched  
The bucket took away  
O how she sighed, this satan-bride  
Close to her ending day

The witches march for Lancaster  
Silent in ragged line  
Looming over East Lancashire  
Old Pendle sat supine

This was the last time they would look  
Upon its hoary slopes  
Soon stopless Death cuts wiccan breath  
Upon the dangleropes

When thirty miles were underfoot  
Fair Lancaster arose  
Whose castle keep & dungeon deep  
That coven did enclose

Demdike tries Satan to contact,  
Hapless necromancer,  
Goes, *"Tibb! Tibb! Tibb!"* & rubs her rib  
But she gains no answer

For Satan is, was, & shall be  
A liar thro' & thro  
With bitter scrike & screech, Demdike  
Did not know what to do

Soon five more witches facing trial  
Join the brood from Pendle  
From Samlesbury (who'd cough'd up three)  
Padiham & Windle

That night did Demdike dream herself  
A girl by Pendle stream  
That with a shake & mighty quake  
Did chasm cross her dream

For now the devil clambers up  
Out of that hissing hole  
*"Evil Demdike do what ye like  
But I shall have yer soul!"*

Out of the dream, with frightful scream  
Old Demdike hard awoke  
Then clutched her chest, that beatless breast  
& dropped dead at a stroke

& while the women wail'd & wept  
They mostly gave up hope  
Full well they ken such an omen,  
Must mean the danglerope

## PART TEN

Lancaster Castle heaps its stone  
Above the city streets  
How beautiful this cathedral  
The cityscape completes

As days to weeks & weeks to months  
Strong spirits hours erode  
Until one day in August, gay,  
The morn in glory glow'd

& now the great sermon begins,  
Lancaster's assizes  
The cells are full &, horrible,  
Fill minds with demises

William Sands, the mayor, stands  
Captaining proceedings  
&, from Clayton, James Anderton  
Helps with legal readings

Now Roger Nowell takes the bench  
With paperweights & scrolls  
This coven yet would soon regret  
They'd ever sold their souls

The prosecution paid its due  
To the sitting judges  
Three noble lights of social flight  
Free from bribes & grudges

There sat Judge Bromby of Altham  
With high-brow'd Lord Gerard  
& sat between, moody & mean,  
Sir Richard Houghton, hard.

The gossip-hunting populace  
This northern court completes  
An audience fidgeting tense,  
Sense wilting in the heat

They listened to Roger Nowell  
Read out the Witchcraft Act  
That will see hung, both old & young,  
Who sign'd a Devil's pact

*"Now one-by-one we shall bring out  
These witches from their cage!"*  
As Nowell said this his hot head  
Empurpl'd in its rage

*"These are satanic becchentes  
& drink each other's blood  
In orgies wild, corpses defiled  
& eaten if they could*

*& they did summon demons up  
Chaunting incantation!"*  
Now his head bow'd & how the crowd  
Howl'd exasperation

Chattox the first to reach the dock  
& there confesses all  
In weeping strains of pins & pains  
& how she sold her soul

& then she rais'd her arms aloft  
To Him high over us  
*"You may spurn me but grant mercy  
To my very daughters!"*

The prosecution shut its book  
A death-warrant self-signed  
By Chattox, led, already dead,  
Back to her dungeon bind

Where with no room to swing a cat  
& claustrophobic too  
Where silence wails, like frighten'd snails,  
Souls to their shells withdrew

## PART ELEVEN

It was now little James' turn  
To face the land's demand  
But he was weak, could barely speak  
& needed help to stand

A pity-plea of innocence  
Was muster'd in defence  
But confession, that smoking gun  
Proves damning evidence

Admitting he had once bewitch'd  
Anne Towneley of Carre Hall  
& to 'Dandy' he had freely  
Deliver'd up his soul

& so wee James was led away  
To share the Chattox fate  
Now one-by-one this crude coven  
Is sentenced at a spate

The judges summon Anne Redfearn  
To take the murder-stand  
Who there did swear with solemn stare  
Leant on her bibl'd hand

*"Your lordships I am not guilty..."*  
The prosecution roar'd  
*"Ye dare defame our Saviour's name!"*  
The audience applaud

Despite protesting innocence  
& evidence paltry  
Anne had no chance, thro circumstance  
They found the lass guilty

Next was wild-eyed Elizabeth  
Wyrd daughter of Demdike  
The gasp-dispensing audience  
Had never seen her like

They thought her very odious,  
No modesty, nor grace  
A toothless grinning specimen  
Dredg'd from the human race

Lizzie was held responsible  
For that bad Good Friday  
Malkin Tower in her power  
When Satan came to play

& yet, the lass admits to naught  
& so the witness star  
Brought to the room to seal the doom  
Of her ain dear mama

Elizabeth screams at Jennet  
*"You spiteful little bitch!"*  
Now Jennet says, to Nowell's praise,  
*"My mother is a witch"*

Elizabeth dragg'd down below  
Back to hern duneon deep  
Where heap'd fears feed the bedlam breed  
& millipedes do creep

Back to her dungeon sinning-cage  
Back to her dark & thirst  
Back to her cell, the living hell  
That women feel the worst

For every tongue, through utter drought,  
Was withered at the root;  
A silent throng, as if each tongue  
Was choking up with soot.

Where witches pass'd a weary time  
Each throat a desert sail,  
With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,  
They could not laugh nor wail

## PART TWELVE

The prosecution quench'd its thirst  
The judges ring their hands  
& with a scowl the watcher's howl  
As witches take the stands

Up stumbl'd trembling Alizon  
Pleading full repentance  
But grey & hoar the pedlar, Law,  
Shall offer evidence

All thro that large assembl'd throng  
Pours sadness of the heart  
Paining to hear how their own peer  
Practic'd the Devil's art

Upon a member of their kith  
& fellow Christian,  
Then clap & bray "*Harroo! Hooray!*"  
When sentencing was done

She was not guiltless of one charge  
But... guilty the other  
*"More dangerous,"* said witnesses,  
Than her mad, bad mother

Here Abraham did leap with glee  
To see the witch sent down  
That cursed crone kept all alone  
As justice comes to town

For fair counsel are serfs denied  
When stood against the state  
Where avarice & prejudice  
Proclaim a person's fate

& witches were the least of all  
Their crimes few could forgive  
Face trial by fire or murky mire  
& death to those that live

Now James & John Bulcock led out  
More crimes the courtroom blames  
O how they cried, identified  
At finger-point by James

For this is how the devil works  
& all those in his league  
A cauldron fill'd with vile ill-will  
Suspicion & intrigue

Now summon'd to the devil's dock  
The lady Nutter stood  
Pois'd for her fall, the judges all  
Desperate for her blood

But every peasant in the crowd  
Refused her as a witch  
For she was great, of good estate  
& she was very rich

So, to convince the court & crowd  
A long line Nowell made  
Of women tall, the truth men call  
Identity parade

Out came wee James & Jennet too  
& each did gladly say  
That Alice Nutter veins did cut  
Upon that Good Friday

& she stood second from the end -  
Thin fingers seal'd her fate  
*"So it shall be..."* said she, nobly  
& slipp'd beneath the grate

To such a gloomy place to be,  
Some desp'rate DEATH-in-LIFE  
As tho they led on stony bed  
'Neath sacrificial knife

## PART THIRTEEN

Now comes the coven's ending-day  
The dungeon is unbarr'd  
& up they go, to daystar glow,  
& they were under guard

They led the witches into town  
Down from steep Castle Hill  
Bare trudg'd their feet yon China Street  
T'where Market Square did fill

It was a crowd thirsting for blood  
Tossing their rotten fruit  
& understood the hangman's hood  
Conceal'd an ugly brute

They went up to the windy moor  
Where gallows stood erect  
There thick ropes hung & breezy swung  
With witches when them neck'd

As three-by-three the witches died  
Upon the dangle-ropes  
Up cheer the crowd, happy & loud  
Upon the clapping slopes

Then jeer when Jane & John Bulcock  
Teary turn to violence  
A quite outrageous death-display  
Til the snapping silence

While jam tarts made a roaring trade  
With the wee pick-pocket  
The lady Nutter sadly put  
In her palm a locket

& opened it to see the smiles  
Of her painted children  
& hopes & prays in coming days  
They would meet in Heaven

Hid in the crowd the Devil stood  
Dress'd like a Christian  
Cheeks puffing pride as each fresh bride  
Was to Cocytus gone

The bodies stack upon the moor  
The gallows creak & groan  
Until the last cut from the mast  
Wee James from life was shorn

The Devil smiled a wicked smile  
& left off thro the crowd  
A happy man, all gone to plan  
& he was very proud

The coven all heap'd in a pit  
But for lady Alice  
Whose noble blood rose from the mud  
To a jewell'd chalice

For she was buried in Newchurch  
Beside the parish pews  
Where thro the years such atmospheres  
The local folk enthuse!

For Pendle Hill, All Hallows Eve,  
Becomes a pagan ground  
Of sable-braided torch parade  
Upon that heathen mound

Where stories that invoke lost days  
Imagination grabs  
A hearty tale wash'd down with ale  
& sticky treacle slabs

So, if you ever pause & view  
Old Pendle's brooding mound  
On Halloween, count to thirteen  
& then ye'll hear a sound

Of witches wailing through the night  
On broomsticks round the hill  
Where all will swear the eldritch air  
Laced with a witches shrill