

Owain Glyndŵr's Court (Iolo Goch)

I have promised twice so far
a fair promise, the promise of a journey;
let each one fulfil, as well as he might,
the promise that he makes.
A pilgrimage, faithful destiny,
a purpose so dear, very great,
is going, purposeful vow,
a benefit, toward's Owain's court;
I vow to go there,
harmless, there I shall stay
to pledge my life honour
with him at our mutual greeting;
my lord is able, highest pedigree,
bright golden leader, to welcome a decrepit old man;
it brings fame, although it be alms,
a shameless state, to be good to the old.
To his court I will quickly go,
out of the two hundred it is the most remarkable.
A baron's court, a refined place,
where poets often come, a good place;
a lady of great Powys, land of Maig,
a place of great promise.

Behold the manner and image it has
in a ring of bright water within a dam:
(isn't it a good court?), a bridge over the lake,
and a single gate where the many go;
there are couples, the roof-beams are joined,
each one together;
Patrick's bell-tower, fruit of the French,
cloister of Westminster, a pleasant enclosure;
each corner bound the same,
a golden chancel, all complete;
connected side by side,
side by side like a house of earth,
and each one the same type of tight knot
all tightly joined together;
a nine-plate house in one mansion,
fine timber houses on a green hill;

with four wondrous timber posts
his court is near the heavens;
on each stout timber post
a sturdy bedchamber on top of a croft,
and the four pleasant bedchambers
joined together, where the poets sleep;
the four high chambers become,
a fine nest for a tribe, eight rooms;
a tiled roof on every gable,
and a chimney that draws the smoke;
nine halls of the same shape and size,
and nine wardrobes in each one,
like splendid shops full of fine merchandise,
a bountiful shop like London's Cheapside;
a cross of a church limewashed all around,
chapels with windows of stained glass;
a full oven serves the court,
an orchard, a vineyard near the bright court;
a fair mill on a constant stream,
and his dovecote, a shining stone tower;
a fishpond, well sheltered,
where nets need to be cast;
well stocked, without doubt,
with pike and fine whiting;
his bord-land and his live birds,
peacocks, elegant herons;
fair meadows of pasture and hay,
corn in orderly fields,
a rabbit-warren for our nation's lord,
ploughs and strong horses, of renown;
beside the court, as brilliant as the rest,
the deer graze in another enclosure;
his villeins do all the relevant work,
ploughing together,
quaffing the best Shrewsbury ale,
the finest liquors and braggets,
every drink, white bread and wine,
and his meat, and his fire for his kitchen;
a shelter for poets, a place for everyone,
every day, everyone is allowed there;
fairest timber court, faultless lord,
of the kingdom, God's blessing be on it;

and the best of wives,
I am blessed by her wine and mead!
a fine girl of a knightly line,
she is noble and generous by nature;
and her children come in two by two,
a fair brood of chieftains.
It was very rare there
to see a latch or lock,
nor any need for a porter;
there will be no need, thanks to him,
no want or hunger or shame,
nor will there ever be thirst in Sycharth.
The best of Welshmen, thoroughly brave,
owns this land, of the line of Pywer Lew,
a man of strong countenance, the best place,
and owns the court; it is a beloved place.