

The Witch of Trewey.

An orphaned maid from a croft at Trewey
Married in haste an older bully,
Who took over her house and made her work
When he his labours would often shirk.
He drank all their cash in the Tinner's Arms
And cursed when sacked from any farms.
'Twas all his fault. He demanded more
Than he deserved for work so poor.
He beat and cursed and deprived his wife
'Till she spied a way to a better life.
Nine times she circled the Giant's Stone
At midnight under a waning moon,
And climbed the logan without it rocking
Then she became something shocking.
A witch with powers to change her shape
To a monstrous creature, a jabbering ape,
To frighten her man into sobriety,
Though it would earn her notoriety.

Her man doubted what she claimed
Though local witches had been named.
One night he returned after drinking deep
And roused her from her restful sleep.
"Where's my dinner you lazy old hag?"
"And money to buy it? There's none in my bag."

"Use your powers, get off to St Ives.
You say you're a witch. I've
Not seen a sign of your special gift.
'Tis all a boast my respect to lift.
Well tidn't going to work. I'll wait
30 minutes and if no food on my plate
I'll take my stick and break your pate."

She opened the door to light her way
And before his eyes began to sway
And shrink to the floor clothed in fur
With beady eyes and pointed ear,
Changed to a hare, she raced outside.
The frightened man curled up to hide
Seeing his future as something unplanned,
Indeed he felt completely unmanned.

In half an hour the door crashed open
And his wife stood tall with food laden.
“You miserable man there’s your proof.
Eat all you can, I’m mistress under this roof.
Just don’t cross me or cause me to curse.
You might lose your mind or even worse.”

She outlived her husband to a great age
And learned more of witchcraft from a sage
Who convened the witches at Zennor Tor
To practise skills from their secret lore.

When she died the priest insisted
That though his religion she resisted
She should be buried in hallowed ground
With hymns and bells, holy sounds.
Six stout men he led to her croft
To carry her coffin held aloft
Along the route of the coffin path
Daring to provoke the witch’s wrath.
They set the casket down to rest
But a hare leapt from the wooden chest.
The men screamed aloud in shock
And scattered to hide behind the rocks.
Undaunted, the priest enlisted more
To bring their burden to the church door.
They kept outside the holy porch
Determined her soul should not scorch
In Hell below that awaited the evil
Though she had sold it to the devil.
As they lowered her box to the ground
The clouds thundered a terrific sound
And on its lid appeared a monster,
Part goat, part pig, which grew bigger
Until it floated above their eyes
And melted into the darkened skies.

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(524 words)

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