

# The Hangman And The Papist

Strawbs

The village square stands quiet with the curfew still in force  
The streets are even clear of dogs and whores  
Like some evil bird of prey the scaffold spreads its wings  
The people build their fires and bolt their doors  
The mayor is giving dinner to the officers and wives  
His eldest son is learning how to fawn  
The barrack block is hushed and tense, the soldiers drawing lots  
Who will be the hangman in the dawn.

The lot falls on a young man who has served for but a year  
His home is in the village close nearby  
He shivers at the thought of what he's forced to do next day  
He wonders who it is that has to die  
The full moon casts a cold light on the gloomy prison walls  
The papist walk his cell, he cannot sleep  
He hears the waiting gallows creaking just beyond the door  
He prays for he has no more tears to weep.

The day begins to break, the muffled drums begin to sound  
A crowd begins to gather in the square  
The presence of the hangman in his terrifying mask  
Weighs heavy on the minds of all those there  
The colonel reads the sentence which the papist knows by heart  
He has failed to show allegiance to the King  
His crime is thus with God himself, in His name he must hang  
The papist, head held high, says not a thing.

The jailer binds his hands and puts the blindfold to his eyes  
He leads him through the door before the crowd  
The hangman sees his victim and the blood drains from his face  
He sees his younger brother standing proud  
The hangman tries to protest but is ordered to proceed  
His trembling hands begin to take the strain  
His eyes are blind with streaming tears, he cries for all to hear  
"Forgive me God, we hang him in thy name".