

BOY: All hail, all hail, both blithe and glad,  
For here come I, a merry lad!  
But cease your din, my master bade,  
Or else the devil you speed!  
I come before - know ye not that! 5  
And any one who makes a crack  
Must also blow my hole so round and black,  
Both the front and the back,  
Till his teeth bleed!  
Fellows, here I you forbid 10  
To make neither noise nor cry;  
Who so is hardy to do that deed,  
The devil hang him up to dry!

I'm quite a lad, let me tell you;  
My master's known as a yeoman true - 15  
You all know him, that's plain!  
If he force you to a fight,  
You'll soon leave that a sorry sight.  
But it seems to me, by God's great might,  
Some of you are his men! 20  
But smile and keep your anger in -  
Harlots, every one! -  
For, if my master comes, welcome him then.  
Farewell, for I am gone!

CAIN: Go forth, Greenhorn! and look out, Grime! 25  
Draw on! - God give you an evil time -  
You stand there in a dream, you swine!  
What? Will ye no further, mare?  
Come on, let's see how Down will go:

Hup, shrew, hup! -pull on a throw, 30  
*And give me the respect you owe!*

I say Donning, on there!  
Aaah, God give thee sorrow and care!  
Lo, now heard she what I said!  
Now art thou yet the worse mare 35  
In plough that ever I had!

Hey! Pickharness, hey! Here, look alive!

BOY: As I breathe, God forbid that ever you thrive!

CAIN: What, boy, shall I both hold and drive?  
Do you hear me not? - how I cry? 40

BOY: Say, Mall and Stott, will ye not go?  
Lemming, Morrell, Whitehorn ho!  
Now will ye not see how they try?

CAIN: God give thee sorrow, boy, from lack of food this comes.

BOY: That's 'cause I lay their food behind their bums, 45  
And tie them fast, front to back,  
With many stones in their food-rack!

CAIN: You're asking for a hard whack!

BOY: I'll pay that back all right!

CAIN: I am thy master! Wilt thou fight? 50

BOY:                   Yea, with the same measure and weight  
                          That I borrow will I requite!

CAIN:                   Whee! now nothing but swear and shout  
                          Until we've ploughed this land.

BOY:                   Harrer, Morrell! go on, move out! -                   55  
                          And let the plough stand.

ABEL:                   God, in his goodness everywhere  
                          Speed thee, brother, and thy man there.

CAIN:                   Come kiss my arse! - now I don't swear -                   60  
                          But thou should never have come;  
                          Thou should have stayed till thou were told.  
                          Come near - and either drive or hold!  
                          And kiss the devil's bum!  
                          Go, grease thy little lamby's bum -  
                          You think it has such charm.                   65

ABEL:                   Brother, hereabouts is none  
                          To wish you any harm.

                          But, dear brother, hear me in this:  
                          Our customary low it is  
                          All that work as the wise                   70  
                          Shall worship God with sacrifice.  
                          Our father us bade, from him we learned  
                          That our tithe should be burned.  
                          Come forth, brother, let us along  
                          To worship God - we stay too long.                   75

Fairly from our fruits give we,  
Corn or cattle, whichever it be.

And therefore, brother, let us wend  
And first cleanse us from the fiend,  
Ere sacrifice we make  
Then bliss without an end  
Get we for our service sake.

80

Of him that is our soul's leech.

CAIN: Oho! let forth your geese; the fox will preach!

How long wilt thou me beseech  
With thy sermoning?

85

Hold thy tongue, again I say -  
There where the good wife stroked the hay -  
Or sit down, in the devil's way  
With thy vain carping!

90

Should I leave my plough and everything  
And go with thee to make offering?  
Nay thou findest me not so mad!  
Go to the devil, and say I bade!  
What gives God thee, to praise him so?  
Me gives he nought but sorrow and care!

95

ABEL: Cain, leave this vain carping,  
For God gives thee all thy living.

CAIN: Yet borrowed I never a farthing  
From him - here's my hand.

100

ABEL:            Brother, as elders have us taught  
                 First, for His love to tithe we ought  
                 Then to the fire should it be brought.

CAIN:            My farthing is in the priest's hand  
                 Since last time I offered.

105

ABEL:            Dear brother, let us no longer stand  
                 I would our tithe were proffered.

CAIN:            Whee! whereof should I tithe, dear brother?  
                 For I am each year worse than other  
                 Upon my oath, it is none other  
                 My winnings are but mean  
                 No wonder, then, that I am lean  
                 Too long to Him may I complain

110

                 For, by him that me dear bought,  
                 I swear that he will give me nought.

115

ABEL:            Yes! - all the wealth that you embrace  
                 Is but a gift of God's good grace.

CAIN:            Gives he to me? Let him treat you so!  
                 For he has ever yet been my foe.  
                 For, had he my friend been,  
                 For otherwise had it been seen.  
                 When all mens corn in fields was thick  
                 Mine wasn't worth a rotten stick!  
                 When I should have sown, and wanted seed  
                 And of corn I had great need,

120

125

Then gave me he none of his;  
No more will I give him of this.  
Heartily hold me to blame  
Unless I serve him of the same!

ABEL: Dear brother, say not so, 130  
But let us forth together go.  
Good brother, let us soon away  
No longer, I advise, we stay.

CAIN: Ya, ya! your words you waste!  
The devil me speed if I make haste. 135  
As long as I may live,  
To share my wealth, or give  
Either to God or yet to man,  
Of any wealth that ever I won.  
For had I given my goods away 140  
I'd be in tatters here today!

Better to keep what I've worked for  
Than to go begging, door to door.

ABEL: Brother, come forth now, in God's name.  
I am afeared we shall get blame. 145  
Fast there let us fly, therefore.

CAIN: What! Run on in thee devil's name before.  
So help true God - you have no brains!  
Do you think that I'll take pains  
My wordly wealth to give away? 150  
The devil take him taught me that way!  
What need had I my labour to lose,

To tear my hose and wear my shoes?

ABEL: Dear brother, it would seem most odd,  
To go our separate ways to God; 155  
Our father would surely wonder why.  
Are we not brothers, thou and I?

CAIN: No. But cry on, cry, my pious lad!  
Here's my belief - I think you're mad!  
Whether that he be pleased or wroth 160  
To give my goods I am truly loth -  
I have often taken a softer line  
When I thought profit might be mine!  
But I see no more I may delay.  
Go first - and ill luck slog your way! - 165  
Since it seems we needs must go.

ABEL: Dear brother, why say you so?  
But go we forth both together.  
Blessed be God we have fair weather!

CAIN: Lay down thy bundle upon this hill. 170

ABEL: Surely, brother, so I will,  
And may our God think well of me.

CAIN: Thou shalt be the first - though mad ye be!

ABEL: Maker of earth and heaven so high  
I pray thee now to hear my cry 175  
And in thanksgiving, if thy will be,

Take here the tithe I offer thee  
For I give it in good intent

To thee, my Lord, that all has sent.  
I burn it now, with steadfast thought,  
In worship of him that all has wrought.

180

CAIN:

Rise! Since thou art done, let me come there.  
Lord of heaven, you hear my prayer! -  
And God forbid you should offer me  
Any thanks or courtesy.

185

For, as I stand upon this hill,  
It surely goes against my will -  
The tithe I offer here to thee,  
Of corn, or things new-grown to me.  
But now, since my tithe I must burn  
I will make ready to take my turn.  
One sheaf, one - and this makes two:  
But neither of these may I forego.

190

Two, two, now is this three:  
Yea, this also shall stay with me,  
For I will choose, and the best keep -  
This is but thrift - of all this heap.  
Now then, where was I? Four, lo here!  
Better grew I not this year.

195

When it was time, fair corn I sowed.  
Yet was it thus, when it was mowed -

200

Thistles and briars, yea, in plenty -  
And all the kinds of weeds there be!  
Four sheaves, four; lo, this makes five:  
I deal them fast, thus, as I thrive!  
Five and six, now this is seven -

205



But this gets never God of heaven!  
Nor none of these four, if I might,

Shall ever come before God's sight.  
Seven, seven, and eight for me.

210

ABEL: Cain, brother, God will offended be.

CAIN: Whee! Therefore is it that I say  
I will not give my goods away!  
But if in tithe I offered this,  
Then would thou say my friend he is;  
But I think not by my hood,  
Lightly to part with corn so good.  
Whee! Eight, eight, and nine, and ten is this -  
Whee! This may we best miss!  
Give him that that's lying there?  
That would cause my heart much care.

215

220

ABEL: Cain, tithe rightly: one in ten!

CAIN: Whee! twelve, fifteen, and sixteen then -

ABEL: Cain, you tithe wrongly - worse and worse.

CAIN: Whee! Cover my eyes from sight of them.  
Your carping cease, or take my curse!  
Or shall I shut my eyes, or blink? -  
Then shall I do no wrong, I think.  
Let me see now how it is:  
Lo, I hold myself well paid!

225

230

So perfectly I tithed, by guess;

So evenly I laid.

ABEL: Cain, of God, methinks, thou has no dread.

CAIN: Now if he get more, devils strike me dead -  
As much as one small stem; 235  
For cheaply that one came to him.  
Not so much as, great or small,  
He might wipe his arse with all.  
For that, and these sheaves that lie here  
Have cost me very dear. 240  
Ere it was cut, and made a stack,  
I had many a weary back.  
Therefore, ask me no more of this,  
For I have given what my will is.

ABEL: Cain, I counsel you: tithe right, 245  
For dread of him that sits on height.

CAIN: How that I tithe, never you mind,  
But tend thy scabby sheep's behind!  
For if thou to my tithe attend  
It will be worse for you, my friend. 250  
Thou would I gave him this streak? Or this here?  
No, neither of these I'll lose, I fear.  
But take this. Now has he two -  
And, by my soul, now that must do.  
Though I shall surely grudge that too 255  
If he should take a jaundiced view.

TOWNELEY CYCLE 2: The Murder of Abel

Final Draft

ABEL: Cain to thy tithe so attend  
That God of heaven be thy friend.

CAIN: My friend? -That choice with him must rest  
I gave him nothing but the best. 260

If, after all, he is my foe,  
I am quite right to treat him so.  
But change thy mind, as I do mine -  
Come, tithe you not your sickly swine?

ABEL: Tithe true: my words you true shall find. 265

CAIN: Ya! Kiss the devil's arse behind!  
The devil by the neck hang thee!  
Never mind how my tithe should be.  
Will thou not yet hold thy peace?  
Of this carping, I tell thee, cease! 270

And, tithe I well, or tithe I ill.  
But now, since thou hast offered thine,  
Now will I set fire to mine.

Whee! Fie upon it! Help to blow! 275  
It will not burn for me now - lo!  
Puff! This smoke gives me much shame.  
Now burn, in the devil's name!  
Ah! what devil of hell is here?  
My breath was almost stopped, I fear. 280

Had I blown but one more breath,  
I had been choked halfway to death.  
It stank like the devil in hell,  
That longer there I might not dwell!

ABEL: Thy tithe is worthless - it's no joke - 285  
For it should burn here without smoke!

CAIN: Come, kiss the devil right in the arse!  
For thee it only burns the worse.  
I would that it were in thy throat -  
Fire and sheaf - every last note! 290

GOD: Cain, why dost thou rebel  
Against thy brother, Abel?  
Thou must neither chide nor swear:  
If thou tithe true, well shall thou fare;  
If thou tithe false, sure may thou be 295  
That thou shall be paid accordingly.

CAIN: Why, who is that hob over the wall?  
Whee! who was that that squealed so small?  
Come, go we hence, for perils all,  
God is out of his wit! 300  
Come forth, Abel, and let us wend.  
I think that God is not my friend.  
Away, then, will I flit.

ABEL: Ah, Cain brother, that is ill done!

CAIN: No, but go we hence soon. 305  
And, if I may, I shall be  
Somewhere where God shall not see me.

ABEL: Dear brother, I will fare

To the fields, to our cattle there.  
To see if they be well or sick. 310

CAIN: Nay, nay, abide! We have a bone to pick.  
Hark, speak with me before ye go.  
What, think you to escape me so  
Whee! nay, I owe thee an injury  
And now I plan to give it thee! 315

ABEL: Brother, why art thou so much in ire?

CAIN: Whee! thief! why burned thy tithe with fire,  
Where mine only smoked,  
As if it would us both have choked?

ABEL: God's will, I think, was here, 320  
And made mine burn so clear.  
If thine smoked, canst thou blame me?

CAIN: Whee! Yea! That shall thou buy now bitterly  
With a jaw bone now, ere I go  
Thy life shall I take with this blow! 325  
So lie down there, and take thy rest.  
Thus shall rogues be chastised best.

ABEL: Vengeance, vengeance, Lord I cry  
For I am slain, and not guilty.

CAIN: Yay! Lie there, rascal, lie there, lie! 330  
And if any of you think I did amiss,  
I shall amend it worse than it is,

That all men may it see.  
Far worse than it is -  
That's just how it will be! 335

But now, since he is brought to sleep.  
Into some hole I must go creep.  
For fear I quake, no help I see -  
For if I be taken, dead shall I be.  
For forty days here will I hide 340  
And curse the man calls me outside!

GOD: Cain, Cain!

CAIN: Who is that that calls to me?  
I am yonder, may thou not see?

GOD: Cain, where is thy brother Abel?

CAIN: Why ask you me? I think in hell: 345  
In hell I think he be -  
Whoso were there, then might he see -  
Or somewhere yonder, sleeping.  
When was he in my keeping?

GOD: Cain, Cain, thou wast mad: 350  
The voice of thy brother's blood  
That thou has slain in this false wise  
From earth to heaven vengeance cries!  
And, since thy brother slain have ye,  
I curse thee here eternally. 355

CAIN:                   Yea, deal it out, for I will none!  
*Or take it thyself when I am gone.*  
 Since I have done such fearful sin  
 That I may not thy mercy win,  
 And thou thus puts me from thy grace                   360  
 I shall hide me from thy face.  
 Wherever any man may find me  
 Let him slay me instantly -  
 Wherever any man may me meet,  
 Either by pathway or by street.                   365  
 And afterwards, when I am dead.  
 Bury me yonder at the quarry-head.  
 For may I leave here in good part,  
 For all men give I not a fart!

GOD:                    Nay, Cain, for this is not my will,                   370  
 No man here may another kill;  
 For he that slays thee, young or old,  
 It shall be punished sevenfold.

CAIN:                   No matter - I know where I shall go.  
 My place must be in hell, below!                   375  
 It is no use mercy to crave  
 For if do, none may I have.

                          But I will this corpse were hid  
 Some man might find it here, I know;  
 "Flee, cursed villain!" would he bid                   380  
 And think I struck the fatal blow.  
 But had I, Pickharness, my knave,

Together we should dig his grave

Ho! Pickharness, villain! Ho, Pickharness, ho!

BOY: Master, master? 385

CAIN: Do you hear, boy? There is a pudding in the pot!  
Take thee that, boy, take thee that!

BOY: I curse thy hood upon thy brow,  
Even were you my father now! -  
All the day to trot and run 390  
And always there's a beating  
Just for your blows it seems I come!

CAIN: Peace, man! I did it but in greeting!  
  
But hark, man, I have a serious thing to say:  
I slew my brother this same day 395  
I pray thee, good boy, and thou may,  
To take the body away.

BOY: Whee! Out upon thee, thief!  
Didst thou thy brother slay?

CAIN: Peace, for God's pains, I say! 400  
  
I said it but in jest.

BOY: Yea, but for fear of the rest,  
Here I thee forsake.  
  
The bailiffs will us both arrest



If here they should us take.

405

CAIN: Ah, sir, I ask you mercy! Cease,  
And I shall pardon you in peace.

BOY: What? Wilt thou cry out my release  
Throughout this land?

CAIN: Yea, quickly I give God my vow!

410

BOY: How will thou do this - tell me how?

CAIN: Stand up, my good boy, make a bow,  
And silence man and wife right now;  
And who will do just as I say  
Will prosper ever, night and day.  
But thou must be ay good boy  
And cry, "oyez! oyez! oy!"

415

BOY: Oysters, oysters, to thy boy!

CAIN: I command you in the king's name,

BOY: And in my masters, too, false Cain,

420

CAIN: That no man with them find fault or blame,

BOY: At home I look for meat in vain

CAIN: Neither with him nor with his knave,

TOWNELEY CYCLE 2: The Murder of Abel

Final Draft

BOY:                   What? Now my master starts to rave!

CAIN:                   For they are true, full manifold,                   425

BOY:                   My master sups his pottage cold.

CAIN:                   The king has written you this bill:

BOY:                   Yet ate I never half my fill.

CAIN:                   The king desires that safe they be.

BOY:                   Yea? A draught of drink now would please me!                   430

CAIN:                   At their own will let them leave

BOY:                   My stomach is ready to receive!

CAIN:                   Let no man say to them one nor other.

BOY:                   This same is he that slew his brother.

CAIN:                   Bid every man to them bow down                   435

BOY:                   Yea, bad cloth comes from weft ill-spun!

CAIN:                   Long till thou prosper, if thou go thus about

Bid every man here now to pay!

BOY:                   Yea, give Don, thy horse, a wisp of hay!

CAIN:                   Whee! Come down in twenty devils' way!                   440  
                           The devil come for you!  
                           Unless it were Abel, my brother  
                           Thy eqyal I never knew.

BOY:                   Now old and young before you wend,  
                           The same blessing without an end                   445  
                           Shall come unto you all

                          That God of heaven my master did give  
                           Enjoy it here while you may live -  
                           He undertakes you shall!

CAIN:                   Come down now, in the devil's way,                   450  
                           And anger me no more.  
                           And take you plough, I say,  
                           And go ye forth, fast, before!  
                           And I shall, if I may,  
                           Teach thee another love.                   455  
                           I warn thee, lad, for aye,  
                           From now on, evermore,  
                           That thou grieve me not;  
                           For, by God's sides, if thou do so,  
                           I shall hang thee upon this plough,                   460  
                           With this rope - lo, lad, lo -  
                           By him that me dear bought!

                          Now, fare well, fellows all, for I must now needs wend  
                           And to the devil be thrall, world without an end  
                           Ordained there is my stall, with Satan as the friend.                   465

Evil luck upon him fall that me to hell would send  
This tide.

Farewell less, and farewell more!

For now and evermore

I go myself to hide!

470

Here ends the killing of Abel. Noah follows.