Tam Lin

Sandy Denny

"I forbid you maidens all that wear gold in your hair
To travel to Carter Hall for young Tam Lin is thereNone that go by Carter Hall but they leave him a pledge
Either their mantles of green or else their maidenhead"Janet tied her kirtle green a bit above her knee
And she's gone to Carter Hall as fast as go can sheShe'd not pulled a double rose, a rose but only two
When up there came young Tam Lin says "Lady, pull no more""And why come you to Carter Hall without command from me?"
"I'll come and go", young Janet said, "and ask no leave of thee"Janet tied her kirtle green a bit above her knee
And she's gone to her father as fast as go can sheWell, up then spoke her father dear and he spoke meek and mild
"Oh, and alas, Janet," he said, "I think you go with child""Well, if that be so," Janet said, "myself shall bear the blame
There's not a knight in all your hall shall get the baby's nameFor if my love were an earthly knight as he is an elfin grey
I'd not change my own true love for any knight you have"Janet tied her kirtle green a bit above her knee
And she's gone to Carter Hall as fast as go can she"Oh, tell to me, Tam Lin," she said, "why came you here to dwell?"
"The Queen of Faeries caught me when from my horse I fellAnd at the end of seven years she pays a tithe to hell
I so fair and full of flesh and feared it be myselfBut tonight is Hallowe'en and the faery folk ride
Those that would their true love win at Miles Cross they must buySo first let past the horses black and then let past the brown
Quickly run to the white steed and pull the rider downFor I'll ride on the white steed, the nearest to the town
For I was an earthly knight, they give me that renownOh, they will turn me in your arms to a newt or a snake
But hold me tight and fear not, I am your baby's fatherAnd they will turn me in your arms into a lion bold
But hold me tight and fear not and you will love your childAnd they will turn me in your arms into a naked knight
But cloak me in your mantle and keep me out of sight"In the middle of the night she heard the bridle ring
She heeded what he did say and young Tam Lin did winThen up spoke the Faery Queen, an angry queen was she
Woe betide her ?ill-fought? face, an ill death may she die"Oh, had I known, Tam Lin," she said, "what this knight I did see
I have looked him in the eyes and turned him to a tree"

Songwriters
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