

## *Alonzo the Brave: a Gothic literary ballad*

VICENTE LÓPEZ FOLGADO  
*Universidad de Córdoba*

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**Resumen:** La balada es un género que comprende una amplia gama de poesía, si bien en sus orígenes significó ‘canción de baile’. Fueron los campesinos a lo largo y ancho de Europa quienes tradicionalmente cantaban y bailaban en sus fiestas baladas relativos a temas como el amor, la juventud y la primavera, siguiendo las pautas de un metro (estrofas de cuatro versos). Sus orígenes se remontan pues a la edad media para muchos, aunque hay quien mantiene (Grigson 1975) que son composiciones más cercanas en el tiempo. Este artículo se centra, no en antiguas baladas sino en la balada literaria, escrita a imitación de las antiguas, y que tuvo su momento de apogeo en el romanticismo. De forma más concreta, trata de una balada ‘gótica’, *Alonzo the Brave*, de 1795, escrita por M. Gregory Lewis, autor de la famosa novela, *The Monk*, en la que la heroína encuentra un volumen de antiguas baladas españolas.

**Palabras clave:** baladas, la balada literaria, la balada romántica, traducción

**Abstract:** A ballad is a genre that covers a wide variety of verse, but the word originally signified a ‘dance song’. Many ballads eloquent of love, youth and the springtide were sung by villagers at their feasting times to a rhythmic measure or ‘ballad metre’ (i.e. four-line stanzas). They are then of ancient origins, and many have traced their medieval origins in folklore traditions, although others place them much nearer to our times. (Grigson 1975). I am concerned here, however, with a kind of ballad, the literary ballad, written in imitation of the old ones, which had their heyday in the Romantic era. More specifically, I shall focus on a Gothic ballad, *Alonzo the Brave*, of 1795, written by M. Gregory Lewis, who contrived a fictional Spanish story, found by the heroine of his famous novel, *The Monk*, in an old Spanish book of ballads.

**Key words:** Ballads, literary ballad, romantic ballad, translation.

### **1. The literary ballad as ‘genre’**

The literary ballad is a legitimate heir to an earlier model, a popular rhyming four-line stanza<sup>1</sup> which had unmistakably oral origins which hark back to late medieval times (Bold 1979). Others place the dates nearer. Grigson (1975: 13) claims that “evidence of manuscripts...indicates as well that the chief age of ballad-making for the people of various ‘ballad-areas’ of England and Scotland was this more or less Shakespearean time, after the Middle Ages...”. There is strong

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<sup>1</sup> The term ‘ballad’ is used to cover a wide variety of verse, though it originally meant a dance song. The original users of ballads were villagers who would sing them in their feasting times where they were mostly concerned with youth, love and springtide. The purpose is narrative, i.e. tell love stories of popular heroes and heroines with the primitive freshness of country men.

evidence, though, that, by the time ballad-making began, popular songs couched in four line stanzas was already familiar to the audiences. Ballads, briefly, were versified stories allied to music. The traditional ballad then was a narrative poem associated with communal dance in country towns and with no traces of authorship. However, the fact of being anonymous unwritten compositions made them be considered at the margins of literary creation. For some authors, notably Compton-Rickett (1960) only two were written down before the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Langland in his 14<sup>th</sup> century poem *Piers Ploughman* already mentions the ballads of *Robin Hood* and of *Randulf*.

Story-telling is supposedly the oldest preoccupation of literature and the ballad is a pure example of telling a story (Andersen et al. 1963) for a spontaneous town street audience. The subject matter that concerns the folk ballad is most varied, ranging from a personal story of a grey character to the exploits of a hero; however, the deeds narrated, often sung by a single singer (traditionally male), who would also play a popular musical instrument (Bronson 1969), tend to be sad and frequently tragic, thus moving the audience's curiosity towards an extraordinary event allegedly true. This no doubt were some of the universal features<sup>2</sup> shared by traditional, folk tales and folk songs, as Kirk (1976) has suggested when introducing the oral tradition in Homer.

Since the ballad has long been considered a sub-genre of literature, in spite of its humble origins, it shares in common with tales and songs some speech traits, particularly the formulaic dialogue, that I shall be looking at in the ballad I have chosen to survey here. The traditional ballad witnessed a revival in the pre-romantic period at the close of the 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>3</sup> of old heroic ballads, songs and other items of early poetry and some writers even devoted to it the highest words of praise as the ancient form of original poetry and "the finest poems in our language". Anonymity is therefore lost. The learned early romantics were aware that "there existed a body of popular verse that had lived on from the Middle Ages, coming down to us chiefly by word of mouth, deeply rooted in the ancient folk-lore of the Aryan race" (Compton-Rickett, 1960: 294)

The fact that they were so structurally simple<sup>4</sup> and popular favoured the slavish imitations close to actual pastiches which could be easily mistaken for a folk ballad. Forgeries were rife at a time when collections were gathered from anonymous folk

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<sup>2</sup> The Russian formalist V. Propp in *Morphology of the Folktale* (originally published in Leningrad, 1928, later translated into French and English) focused on the underlying structure of tales, which by analogy can be also applied to basic balladry (Andersen et al. 1983).

<sup>3</sup> Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) voiced a revival of this genre, which actually proved much influential when popular literature shorn of all ornament became an inspiration for poets like Scott and Wordsworth. The ballad usually followed closely the model of a four line stanza, imitated by many romantics.

<sup>4</sup> The popular preference for the ballad surely lies in its charming simplicity and its harping on primitive emotions and feelings. This does not mean, however, that it is a rhetorically formless sort of composition.

sources. One of the earliest collections<sup>5</sup> accepted a Walter Scott's artificial ballad as belonging to the popular Scottish lore.

One famous forgery was a direct consequence of this curiosity in old folklore, namely, *Ossian* by McPherson<sup>6</sup>, which raised a heated controversy in the world of literature, and exerted a long-lasting influence on contemporary writers. It gave fresh inspiration to poets like Coleridge, Keats, Scott and Wordsworth. Examples of famous Romantic pieces worth mentioning are inspired by the ballad: *The Ancient Mariner* or *La Belle sans Merci* imitate the simple narrative form and language of the ballad<sup>7</sup>. This simplicity is basic in many Romantic writers, as Compton-Rickett (1960: 295) suggests:

The new attitude towards Nature was indeed only part of a larger naturalism that sought to bring us back to the bosom of Nature, and reclaim us from the superfluous conventions with which we had choked the elemental verities of life. As a result of this we got the idealising of childhood by Blake and Wordsworth, and of simple unsophisticated natures by Burns, Wordsworth, and Coleridge; and the sense of mystery which we have seen sending seekers to a remote past, was gradually realised to be capable of satisfaction closer at hand.

The most celebrated of the 'new' ballads was Samuel T. Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* written in 1798 in imitation of the style and spirit of the old ones. Percy's *Reliques* provided him with one of the known versions of the famous legend of the "Wandering Jew", where he narrates in archaic speech and varying number of lines per stanza, the lonesome wanderer through a sea of trouble. It thus

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<sup>5</sup> Francis J. Child's well known edition of *The English and the Scottish Popular Ballads*, 5 vols. 1884-98, repr. in Dover Publications, New York, 1965. Most of the literary ballads, though, did not aim at deceiving the unaware readers. The case of Chatterton as forger can be considered unique in English literature. He had actually attributed his poem *Bristowe Tragedy* to a 15<sup>th</sup> century monk, a Thomas Rowley. In fact it is a poem based on historical events during the War of the Roses.

<sup>6</sup> The Ossian poems arose bitter controversies in Dublin circles, when the first books *Fingal* and *Temora* were published. The Irish thought that Scotland made their own the heroes of their epic legend that belonged to them. The ensuing influence of those supposed translations from an ancient celtic language brought in turn an unprecedented wave of translations into English and other languages. Cf. Isidoro Montiel, *Ossian en España*, E. Planeta, Barcelona 1974.

<sup>7</sup> Just to mention Keats's famous ballad, derived, among other sources, from medieval chivalric romances, and particularly on the queen of Elfland in the ballad *Thomas Rymer*. Thomas is lying on a grassy bank when a beautiful lady lures him away on her white steed. She cautions him against the fruit in fairland, as a mortal cannot eat it without danger. When Thomas yields to the lady's enchantments he seals his doom with a kiss; thereafter he must spend seven years in fairland before he may return to earth. Keats' first stanza (three 8 syllable lines + 4 syllable) goes:

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,  
Alone and palely loitering?  
The sedge is wither'd from the lake,  
And no birds sing

surpasses the pure ballad form which he expands and exploits successfully. The beginning stanzas, though, are suitably cast into the old ballad mould:

It is an ancient Mariner,  
and he stoppeth one of three.  
“By the old grey beard and glittering eye,  
Now wherefore stopp’ d thou me?”

One of the literary authors keenest on balladry was Scott. He became acquainted with the translation by William Taylor in 1794 of a notable German ballad, Gottfried A. Bürger’s<sup>8</sup> *Lenore* written some twenty years before. He made a later version into English of this harrowing ballad. The hero is a dead soldier’s spectre who elopes and runs away with his beloved riding a ghost steed to marry her during a dark night. At cockcrow the bridegroom’s steel outfit falls into pieces and the horse dissolves into mist. This poem has all the characteristics of a tragic tale that is common in early ballads plus the literary additions of a ghostly atmosphere. The method of narrative unfolding is advanced by a series of ‘flashes’ where distinct scenes follow one another without an apparent thread of connection, as we may typically encounter in *La belle dame sans Merci*. In Morris’s<sup>9</sup> *The Sailing of the Sword* two different scenes are juxtaposed: the ship leaves in autumn and returns in the summer.

The action is often narrated, but it can also unfold when the ballad is told through a dialogued form. We have already seen it above in the stanza of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Furthermore, quite a number of the ballads are composed in question and answer form, the information about the events progressing as the characters tell the story step by step, shorn of irrelevant matter. It is then noticeable that the reader has to put in some interpretive effort while inferring how the core of the action may have happened. Inference is fundamental in some laconic narrative plots. Take, for instance, Rossetti’s<sup>10</sup> strategy of beginning *in medias res*, where the reader has to make guesses as to the starting point of the story. Thus in *Sister Helen* begins mysteriously:

“Why did you melt your waxen man,  
Sister Helen?”

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<sup>8</sup> The most famous Gothic ballad from which many drew inspiration was written by the German pre-romantic G. A. Bürger. The translations —up to seven translations appeared in English within the year 1796—came to foster the Gothic wave in the English pre-romantic period. Walter Scott also tried his hand at it giving a free version entitled *William and Helen*. The most celebrated was that done by William Taylor, of Norwich, entitled *Leonora* published in “The Monthly Magazine” where Coleridge also read it and praised it.

<sup>9</sup> One could expect to find that the ‘antiquarian’ and ‘medievalist’ William Morris was also fond of ballads, which have a sort of medieval air in the topics approached as well as in the style of the stanzas, the strongly pictorial scenes reminiscent of his famous tapestries.

<sup>10</sup> Dante Gabriel Rossetti makes avail of melodrama and witchcraft knowledge where one can destroy an enemy by melting his waxen image on a flame. The poet kept re-doing the elaborate narrative ending in a typical refrain and adding verses (up to a total of 238 lines) to the already long original ballad till the end of his life (Ehrenpreis 1966: 140).

Alonzo the Brave: a Gothic literary ballad.

Today is the third since you began”  
Time was long, yet the time ran,  
Little brother.”

However elaborate they may seem, we must not forget that ballads are the oldest, if somehow the easiest, and surely the most enduring of all poetic forms. This means that a single ballad had undergone a number of recited versions throughout the ages. The medieval or Elizabethan ballad that appears in print today is probably only one version of the many extant forms. Ballads, traditionally the main vehicle for stories and songs, as we have already pointed out, go back into the mists of history, when Celtic languages were still spoken on the British soil and well before we can refer to English as a unified language. David Buchan (1973) suggests that the supreme ‘ballad area’ of North-East Scotland the re-creative invention comes within the wide limits of 1350 and 1750. The most recognizable form is that of a simple story born out of personal experience, suitable to be told in the market place before an spontaneous popular audience. The changing conditions of that primitive society accounts for the fading of ballad singing<sup>11</sup>. Love experience, often ending in tragic death, is perhaps the most frequent of all topics:

In Scarlet Town, where I was born,  
There was a fair maid dwellin’  
Made every lad cry wellaway,  
And her name was Barbara Allen.

The dramatic, tragic element was a constant leitmotif in ballads, important to maintain the suspense effect on the audience. Nearly as well known is the tale of Sally Brown, who tricked a serial killer into an unwary moment, enabling her to push him off a cliff into the sea:

"Lie there, lie there, you false young man,  
Lie there, lie there," said she.  
"Six little maidens you've drowned here,  
Go keep them company!"

## 2. The romantic inspiration in balladry

A model for later inspiration was Scott's *Proud Maisie* where a bird replies mysteriously to the questions posed by Maisie. In Swinburne<sup>12</sup> dialogued ballads like *The Sea Swallows*, we are revealed the macabre events through a dialogue

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<sup>11</sup> As Buchan points out, "the oral ballad-story produces, by oral transmission, oral texts...The chap ballad-story appears initially in a printed text, and then produces, by transitional transmission, chap-transitional texts." (*A Scottish Ballad Book*, Routledge. London, 1973)

<sup>12</sup> Algernon Charles Swinburne had a lifelong passion for ballads and he apparently knew well the sources of the ballad literary tradition. Coming from northern England he was directly in touch with a folklore that was then steeped in balladry. He even edited a collection of ballads in his youth, which were later manipulated (*Posthumous Poems*, 1917). The two parts of the manuscript are now kept in the Harvard College Library and in the Ashley Library of the British Museum.

between parent and child, where we have to make frequent inferences as to the speakers of some lines.

Yet another feature shared by many of the ballads created in the romantic period was the characteristic ancient speech, either through words and expressions of medieval English or northern dialects with slight ingredients of Celtic turns of speech. Swinburne, reputed as a gooe ear for musical, rhythmic effects, also recreated the verbal effects of old words and dialect pronunciation put in the mouths of local, humble people, as in *Duriedyke*:

“The foremast shines like new lammer,  
the mizen-mast like steel:  
Gin ye wad sail wi’ me, Maisry,  
The warst should cry ye weel”

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century scholarly interest in the folk ballad, first aroused by Bishop Percy’s *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), was significantly inspired by Sir Walter Scott’s *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802). Francis Child’s influential collection, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (5 vol., 1882–98), marked the high point of 19<sup>th</sup>-century ballad scholarship. More than 300 medieval English and Scottish<sup>13</sup> folk ballads, dating back from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, are now extant<sup>14</sup>. Although the subject matter varies considerably, we may distinguish five major classes of the traditional ballad:

- a) the historical, such as “Otterburn” or “The Bonny Earl o’ Moray”;
- b) the romantic, like “Barbara Allan” and “The Douglas Tragedy”;
- c) the gothic or supernatural, such as “The Wife of Usher’s Well”;
- d) the sea sailing, like “Henry Martin”;
- e) lastly, the heroic, such as the “Robin Hood” cycle.

As we argued above, the literary ballad is a made-up poem based on an older legend or romance, which were usually a short, simple song that tells a dramatic story through dialogue and action. Therefore, it pays scarce attention to depth of character, setting description or moral commentary<sup>15</sup>. Moreover, it uses simple language, and common words, dramatic contrasts, recurrent epithets, set phrases, and frequently a stock refrain. Although syllable counting became more common in romanticism, perhaps due to French verse readings, we can still witness the survival of traditional stress-based Angloxason verse at work. Four or three foot stresses alternating and with the second and fourth lines rhyming. In other words, the famous

<sup>13</sup> We should also add the contribution made by the Irish ballad tradition as collected by H. H. Sparling, *Irish Mistrrels*, Dublin 1887, and later P. W. Joyce, *Old Irish Folk Music and Songs*, Dublin 1909, and further Colm O Lochlainn, *Irish Street Ballads*, Dublin 1952.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Bell, *Ancient Poems, Ballads and Songs of the Peasantry of England*, London 1861, cited in Robert Graves, *English and Scottish Ballads*, Heinemann: London, 1957.

<sup>15</sup> D. C. Fowler, *A Literary History of the Popular Ballad*, Oxford U. Press, 1968.

English iambic tetrameter or trimeter is the usual rhythmic unit. As G. Grigson (1975: 10) notes, “The measure and the rhyme and the succession of small units helped the memorability; so did the various other tricks, various other repetitions such as the stock formulae of introduction, episode, action and signing off”.

For instance, in the well known “Barbara Allen” we have a basic iambic tetrameter—which here corresponds to an endecasyllabic verse—alternating with a trimeter—here an octosyllabic verse—. It is not rare to find a shorter type of verse, alternating octosyllabic and hexasyllabic verses in alternating lines. Often one can find that irregularity and variation in foot and spondees are quite frequent, mainly due to the fact that English tends to be, morphologically speaking, a monosyllabic language. Here follows the example:

It was in and abóut the Mártnmas tíme,  
When the gréen léaves wére a fálling,  
That Sir Jóhn Gráeme, in the Wést Cóuntry,  
Féll in lóve with Bárbara Állan

Or take a translation, the influential “Ellenore”, from the German Bürger, translated by William Taylor, famous for its rhythmic metre:

At break of day from frightful dreams  
Upstartd Ellenore,  
My William, art thou slayn she sayde  
Or dost thou love no more?

In the Preface to his *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) William Wordsworth confessed his purpose of writing “in the real language of men”<sup>16</sup> in order to be faithful to the diction of sincere sentiments of man, conceived of as a natural creature. His ballad *Lucy Gray* (bearing the subtitle ‘Solitude’) shows the cited artless diction. In the *Seven Sisters* (1807) Wordsworth took the plot from a German folk tale and set the scene in Scotland<sup>17</sup>, since it reflects an atmosphere close to the Scottish ballads, where there is already another entitled *The Two Sisters*<sup>18</sup> However, in the latter ballad Wordsworth attains a complexity of stanza, in rhyme and rhythm that takes him far from the original simplicity of such metrical compositions. Walter Scott collected many samples of ballads around Scotland<sup>19</sup> and became an accomplished connoisseur of Scottish balladry. Sometime later Charles Kingsley wrote the ballad

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<sup>16</sup> cf. *Preface to Lyrical Ballads* (1800) to the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, Cambridge U. Press 1975.

<sup>17</sup> D. C. Fowler, *A Literary History of the Popular Ballad*. Oxford U. Press, 1968.

<sup>18</sup> Tennyson composed *The Sisters* in 1833 drawn from earlier sources like the ballad *The Twa Sisters*, that tells the story of two sisters who are enmeshed in a deadly web of love for the same man (in this case an Earl, who comes out in the refrain: “O the Earl was fair to see!”) resulting in the killing of one by the other out of a fit of jealousy.

<sup>19</sup> In his early collection of ballads and popular songs from the Scottish folklore that he entitled *Mistrelsy of the Scottish Border* and he imitated many and reconstructed other with his own additions whenever he found the occasion to do so. Needless to say, his Scottish novels are steeped in mistrelsy and balladry.

*The three Fishers*<sup>20</sup> There three sailors ended up their lives among women's weeping.

Twentieth century poets, from Hardy to Wilde<sup>21</sup> and Dylan Thomas, have continued to draw freely on traditional ballad<sup>22</sup>, and "its influence shows no sign of abating" (Ehrenpreis, 1966: 18).

### 3. The Ballad of Alonzo the Brave and Fair Imogine

Matthew Gregory Lewis made popular the Gothic ballad full of awe and horror. Grim spectres and ghastly nightmares enjoyed great fame among the learned readers of the times. Among them were celebrities like Scott, Byron or Shelley. Lewis wrote a notable story —or Gothic novel, if this label would be correct — entitled *The Monk* which gained him the nickname of "The Monk Lewis", such was the fame achieved by the novel. In those pages the heroine finds *Alonzo the Brave* in a volume of 'Old Spanish Ballads'. The fake poem became very popular indeed, and the rollicking metre was much admired, as it prompts a singing tune to the rhythm of the five verses (in perfect iambic tetrameter combining with a trimeter in second and five which adds gracefulness to the whole stanza).

Its starting stanza runs as follows:

A warrior so bold and a virgin so bright  
 Conversed, as they sat on the green;  
 They gazed on each other with tender delight:  
 Alonzo the Brave was the name of the knight,  
 The maid's was the fair Imogine.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Charles Kingsley, whose celebrated novel *Westward Ho!* which takes the name from a North Devon small coastal town, draws his inspiration from old local folklore, where the danger of storms and deep sea voyages were hanging over seamen. Prayers were said while drown corpses came up the beach among the cries of women:

"But men must work, and women must weep,  
 Though storms be sudden, and waters deep."

<sup>21</sup>Oscar Wilde, in *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, about a murderer waiting for execution, skillfully makes the six-line stanza his ballad framework:

And all men kill the thing they love,  
 By all let this be heard  
 Some do it with a bitter look,  
 Some with a flattering word,  
 The coward does it with a kiss,  
 The brave man with a sword!

<sup>22</sup>A. B. Friedman, ed., *The Viking Book of Folk Ballads of the English-Speaking World*. Viking Press, New York, 1982.

<sup>23</sup> In Spanish translation it starts:

Un apuesto guerrero y una hermosa doncella  
 sentados conversaban en el verdor en un prado;  
 mirándose a los ojos con tierno regocijo;  
 era Alonzo el Valiente el nombre del guerrero,  
 era el de la doncella Imogine la Bella. (my trans.)



Here we may note the convention of the characters introduction and identification: a virgin and a warrior in love sitting on a pleasant scene, on the green. We may also find the common feature of all dialogue resource where the two characters converse in the following stanza:

—“And, oh!” said the youth, “since tomorrow I go  
To fight in a far-distant land,  
Your tears for my absence so leaving to flow,  
Some other will court you, and you will bestow  
On a wealthier suitor your hand.”—

Thus, absence is part of the convention that develops the plot of the story in order to put to test the faithfulness of the dame. The fact that the warrior tells his lover about his untrusting concern in his own words, makes the plot more vivid and forceful.

The expected response from the maid is to calm down his fears while swearing his faithfulness, an element that arouses some effects in the reader and while triggering new expectations:

—“Oh! hush these suspicions,” Fair Imogine said,  
“Offensive to love and to me!  
For, if you be living, or if you be dead,  
I swear by the virgin, that none in your stead  
Shall husband of Imogine be.

The swearing goes to the extent of its further confirming with a pledge, where she is committed to the promise that, if she forgets that verbal pledge, may God punish her for false pledge and perjury. And here the author introduces the harrowing element: “your ghost at the marriage may sit by my side”.

Away goes the warrior to Palestine and after some time the temptation knocks at the door of poor Imogine: a rich Baron covered with bright jewels and gold. And Imogine surrenders to such display of wealth, forgetting her vain vows and her weak pledge. The fault is placed, though, on the Baron’s side: “he dazzled her eyes, he bewildered her brain” and she’s taken to his suitor’s castle as his spouse.

But then the wedding day arrived: feasting and revelry was interrupted by the chiming of the castle clock at ‘one’. Suddenly, she found a silent, motionless stranger with terrific air placed by her side, hiding his face and gazing on the bride. That spine-chilling knight caused terror to the wedding guests, “his presence all bosoms appear to dismay”. Then at the bride’s request, he lifts his vizor and all terrified saw...an awesome skull full of worms! Then the spectre spoke: “Behold me, though false one! behold me!”. The dreadful spectre remind her of her vows and accuses her of perjury. It is easy to guess what came next: he takes her to the grave, and both are swallowed by the ground. She was never seen again.

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four, of a non narrative kind, is likely to suffer some loss in the translation. Let us see:

And if e'er for another my heart should decide,  
 Forgetting Alonzo the Brave,  
 God grant, that, to punish my falsehood and pride,  
 Your ghost at the marriage may sit by my side,  
 May tax me with perjury, claim me as bride,  
 And bear me away to the grave!"

Such wishes, predicting and conjuring the falsehood of the would be bride, are densely expressed in a pithy style. A tentative translation would run as follows:

"¡Y si una vez a otro entregara mi amor,  
 de este modo olvidando a Alonzo el Valiente,  
 plegue a Dios que en castigo a mi orgullo y mentira,  
 tu espíritu en la boda a mi lado se siente,  
 me acuse de perjurio, me reclame de novia,  
 y me lleve con él para siempre a la tumba!" (my trans.)

The rhythm increase its forceful narrative speed as the final *denouement* comes to a close. At the same time the rhythmic scansion of accents becomes increasingly regular and chantable.

Thus saying, his arms round the lady he wound,  
 While loudly she shriek'd in dismay;  
 Then sank with his prey through the wide-yawning ground:  
 Nor ever again was Fair Imogine found,  
 Or the spectre who bore her away.

The iambic regularity is apparent, which adds a musical quality to the ballad. The translation of such rhythm, needless to say, becomes almost an impossible task. All we can do with rhythmic ballads is to aim at content resemblance, if it can be achieved at all. Let us try our hand at it:

Y así hablando, sus brazos a la doncella agarran,  
 mientras gritos lanzaba de terror y de angustia;  
 Luego con ella presa en el suelo se hundió:  
 Y nunca se vio ya a la Bella Imogine,  
 ni al espectro cruel que con él la llevó.

In conclusion, I would like to add that the translation of a highly rhythmic ballad is a hard task that can be grappled with only with a great deal of patience and repeated trials, leaving one at the end with the sense of frustration and failure.

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