

A Traveler's Tale

A-hiking o'er the mountainside
Midst fog and gloom and wood,
I came upon a little man
A-weeping where he stood.
He beat his breast with heavy hands
And sighed, "She's gone for good."

Great tears splashed down from one small eye
And, ach, his nose was red.
His hair flew wildly 'round his face
As if to flee his head.
I bent to offer comfort, but
"She's gone," was all he said.

So down I sat and pulled a great
Big hankie from my vest.
The troll reached out (he was a troll)
And held it to his chest
Then wiped his eye and blew his nose
And moaned, "I should have guessed."

"Guessed what?" I ventured quietly,
For soon I hoped to hear
The fellow's tale to lighten thus
His load and offer cheer.
My precious love, my sweet, sweet love
Is gone fore'er from here."

"Full two months past," the troll went on
"I met a lovely thing
So delicate and fair of face
And amethyst of wing!
She was a fairy of the glade
And made my heart to sing."

"Alas, the Fairy Queen herself
Grew jealous of my joy.
The loved that danced throughout the glade
She threatened to destroy.
'Be still! Be sad! Be gone!' she screamed,
'You ugly hag troll's boy.'"

"Before the queen's words left her lips,
My fairy love so dear
Began to turn a pale, pale green,
To shrink and disappear.
The Fairy Queen laughed long and left.
And thus, you see me here."

Again the troll began to cry.
His tears splashed on the ground
And lo, from down beneath his feet
There came the sweetest sound.
'I'm here, my love,' a lilting voice
Did gently echo 'round.

Small heart-shaped leaves and slender stem
Sprang forth from earth below.
A bud appeared and, wondrously,
A flower began to grow
Until a purple blossom shaped
Like wings swayed to and fro.

And as it swayed, it touched the troll.
His ruddy face turned white.
'This is my jewel,' he cried, 'my gem,
Transformed before my sight.'
That gloomy wood, that foggy glade
Shone gently gold with light.

I left him there, the little troll
So lately I had met,
And if you come to where I stood,
You'll see him standing yet
Beside his flow'r, his lovely flow'r,
His precious violet.

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