

THE CASTLE BY THE SEA

Ludwig Uhland (1787-1862)

Have you seen the castle,
the castle by the sea,
where cloudbanks tinted amber
move on so solemnly?

It kneels before the water,
reflected far below;
it rises from the mirror
in twilight's final glow.

Yes, I've seen the castle,
the castle by the sea,
the moon and clouds above it,
the luminosity.

Did you hear the water,
the breezes quick and gay?
The strings and minstrels singing
in halls above the bay?

The wind and waves were quiet
and lay so deep and still,
I heard a voice lamenting,
a mournfulness and chill.

Did you glimpse above you
the king and bride step out,
their crowns both streaming golden,
and red capes blown about?

And did there walk behind them
a virgin dazzling fair,
splendid as the sunlight
and gold all through her hair?

Yes, I saw the parents,
but not their crowns of pearl,
and clad in black of mourning;
I saw no virgin girl.

—*Translated by Terese Coe*

“The Castle by the Sea” © 2006 by Terese Coe

Contemporary Rhyme Vol. 3 No. 2 Spring 2006