

## Medieval Ballads

### THE BALLADS

Even during the period when Norman French was the official language of the court, common people continued to produce oral poetry and songs. Many songs of the common people, known as **ballads** (poetry sung to music), survived for hundreds of years, long enough to be printed after the invention of the printing press, or gathered by scholars from oral sources. The ballads were simple narratives in four-line stanzas that served as entertainment and as records of events that captured the popular imagination. Some ballads told fantastic tales of ghosts and demons. Some recorded important events, such as the death of a lord or the sinking of a ship. Others immortalized legendary outlaws such as **Robin Hood**. Many were simple tales of love or betrayal.

**MOOD. Mood, or atmosphere,** is the emotion created in the reader by art or all of a literary work. A writer creates a mood through judicious use of concrete details.

**RHYME SCHEME AND BALLAD.** A **rhyme scheme** is a pattern of end rhymes, or rhymes at the ends of lines of verse. The rhyme scheme of a poem is designated by letters, with matching letters signifying matching sounds. A **ballad** is a simple narrative poem in four-line stanzas, usually meant to be sung and rhyming *abcb*.

**silksies**, seal-like creatures who lived in the sea but could come to land and take human form (shape shifters)

### Traits

4 line stanzas

Simple narrative

Entertainment

Recorded scandalous events

Supernatural

Refrain

Omission of details

Incremental repetition

Question answer format

4 stress/ 3 stress meter

Rhyme scheme

Mood