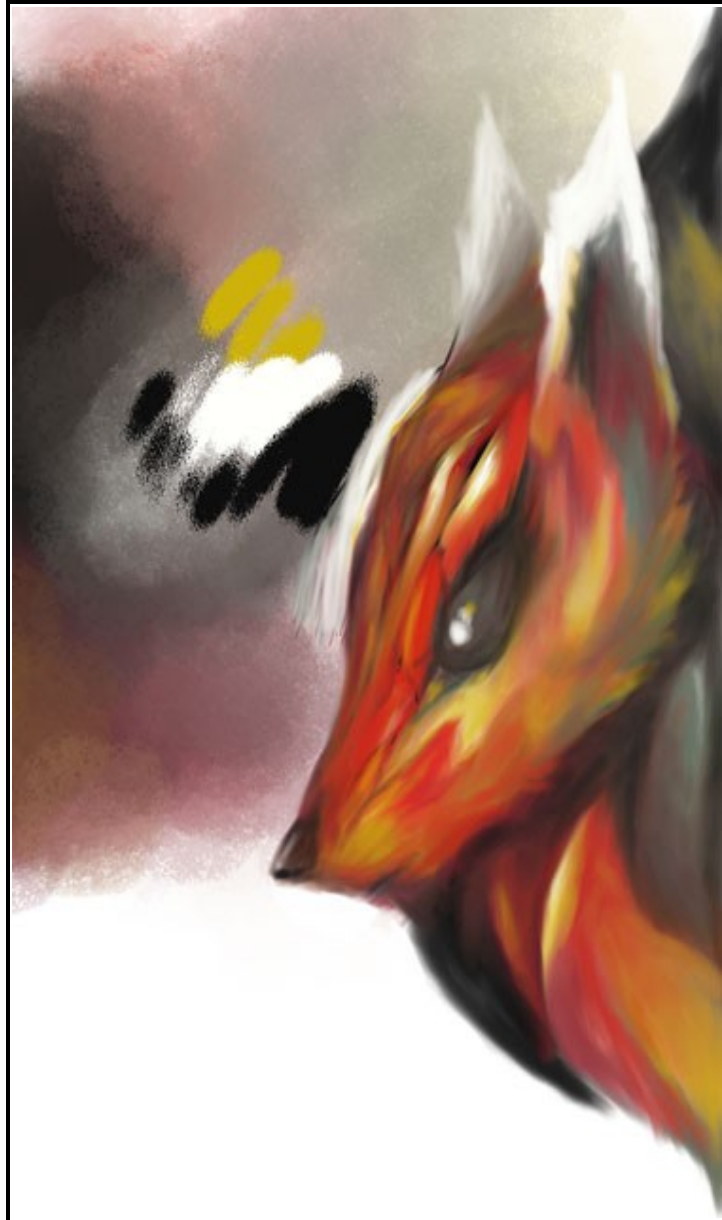


WHERE RIVERS END

*The Slaying of Cuuuaert*



Recorded in Winter 2006/2007 by:

T.A. :: Harp

O.S. :: Voice, Guitar, Drone

A.T. :: Lapland Drum, Production

Music by O.S. & Where Rivers End. Illustration by A.T.

The words were taken from the mediaeval text of *Van den Vos Reynaerde*, as written down in Flanders. The epic poem, written in Middle Dutch, is a fable about the cunning fox Reynaert, and it holds up a satirical mirror to the society of that time, and indeed of all times. Neither clergy, nobility, nor the common man are spared critical and humourous comment in this tale. And the deeds of the sly fox himself? Let the hearer judge...

Below is a brief synopsis of events relevant to the text of this song. What follows are the verses as sung, and a literal (thus unpretty) translation.

Reynard escaped from a death sentence by King Noble the Lion, by deceiving him with a story about a lost treasure, and about the alleged treason of Isengrim the Wolf and Bruun the Bear, his sworn enemies. Reynard swore he would go to Rome as a pilgrim to ask forgiveness for his many sins. Belijn the Ram and Cuwaert the Hare were to accompany Reynard to his home, where he would bid his wife, Hermeline, farewell. But the actual result is quite different:

Also Reinaert voer de poorte quam,  
Doe sprac hi: 'neve Belijn de ram,  
Ghi moet alleene buten staen.  
Ic moet in mine veste gaen;  
[...]

Als si in dat hol quamen,  
Cuwaert ende Reinaert tsamen,  
Doe vonden si vrouwe Hermelinen  
Met haren cleenen welpkinen.

Die was in sorghen ende in vare,  
Want soe waent, dat Reinaert ware  
Verhanghen, ende als soe vernam,  
Dat hi weder thuuswaert quam,  
Ende palster ende scerpe droeg,  
Dit dochte haer wonders ghenoech.  
Soe was blide ende sprac saen:  
'Reinaert, hoe sidi ontgaen?'

Reinaert sprac: 'Ic was ghevaen,  
Maer di coninc hi liet mi gaen.  
Ik bem worden peelgrijn;  
Heere Brune ende heere Isengrijn  
Sijn worden ghisele over mi.  
Die coninc hevet (danc hebbe hi!)  
Cuwaerde ghegheven in rechter soene,  
Al onsen wille mede te doene.

As Reynard came before the gate  
He spake: 'friend Belijn the ram,  
You must wait outside alone.  
I must go into my fastness/castle;'

When they came into the hole,  
Cuwaert and Reynard together  
They found lady Hermeline  
With her little welps.

She was in grief and in fear,  
For she thought that Reynard were  
Hung, and when she heard,  
That he was returning home,  
And bore pilgrim's staff and sash,  
She thought this wonderful.  
She was joyful and spake thus:  
'Reynard, how did you escape?'

Reynard spake: 'I was bound,  
But the king, he let me go.  
I have become pilgrim;  
Lord Bruun and Lord Isengrim  
Were whipped instead of me.  
The King has given (thanks unto him!)  
Cuwaert as a just compensation,  
For us to do with as we will.

Die coninc sleve die liëde das,  
Dat Cuwaert die eerste was  
Die ons verriet jeghen hem:  
Ende bi der trauwen die ic bem  
Sculdich u, vrouwe Hermeline,  
Cuwaerde naket eene grote pine.  
Ic bem up hem met rechte gram'.  
Ende also dat Cuwaert vernam,  
Keerdi hem omme ende waende vlien,  
Maer dat ne conste hem niet ghescien;  
Want Reinaert hadde hem ondergaen  
Die porte, ende ghegreepende saen  
Bi der kelen mordadelike.  
Ende Cuwaert riep ghenadelike:  
'Helpt mi, Belijn, waer sidi?  
Dese peelgrijn verbijt mi.'

Dat roepen was sciere ghedaen,  
Bedi Reinaert hadde saen  
Sine kele ontwee ghebeten.  
Doe sprac Reinaert: 'nu gaen wi eten  
Desen goeden vetten hase.'  
Die welpinen liepen ten ase  
Ende ghingen eten al ghemeene.  
Haren rauwe was wel cleene,  
Dat Cuwaert hadde verloren tlijf.  
Hermelinen, Reinaerts wijf,  
At dat vleesch ende dranc des bloets

The King himself acknowledged,  
that Cuwaert was the first  
that betrayed us against him:  
And by the troth I  
owe to you, Lady Hermeline  
Cuwaert is due a great punishment.  
I am justly wrathful upon him.'  
And when Cuwaert heard that,  
He turned around and tried to flee,  
But in that he could not succeed;  
Because Reynard had cut him off  
To the gate, and seized him thus  
By his throat, murderously.  
And Cuwaert shouted pleadingly:  
'Help me, Belijn, where art thou?  
This pilgrim is killing me.'

That shouting was soon ended,  
For Reynard had thus  
Bitten his throat in two.  
Than spake Reynard: 'now we shall eat  
This good fat hare.'  
The welps walked to the food,  
And started eating together.  
Their grief was rather small,  
That Cuwaert has lost his life.  
Hermeline, Reynards wife,  
Ate of the flesh, and drank of the blood.

- O. S.  
*April 2007*