

An cuala sibh mu 'n mhaighdean cheutach?

We got this song from the singing of Flora MacNeil. We think it is quite breathtaking in its honesty, and quite beautiful in how it turns a distasteful subject into something very poetical.

HAGHAIDH O HAGHAIDH O HO
HAGHAIDH O A HI A BHO
HAGHAIDH O HAGHAIDH O HO

An cuala sibh mu 'n mhaighdean cheutach
Air an tug Niall Bàn an éiginn?
'S truagh a Rìgh nach b'e mi fhéin i.
Cha shracainn broilleach do léine.
Nan sracadh, gum fuaighinn fhéin i 5
Le snathaid bhig 's le snàth glé gheal,
'S nighinn ann an sruthan sléibh i,
Thiormaichinn air bhàrr nan geug i,
Chuirinn an t-iarann na dhéidh oirr',
'S bheirinn paisgt' an làimh do phéid i.

'S truagh nach robh mi 's tus', a ghràidhein, 11
An eilean mara nach tràghadh
'S gun an t-aiseag bhith nar fàbhar
Gus an éireadh grian a màireach.

*Did you hear about the pretty girl
whom Niall Ban raped?
O Lord, I wish it had been me.
I would not have torn the breast of your shirt.
If I tore it, I myself would sew it 5
with a little needle and pure white thread.
I would wash it in the mountain stream.
I would dry it on top of the bushes.
I would then put the iron on it,
and I would give it folded into the hand of your page.*

*I wish you and I, darling, were 11
in the little island of the sea, with no ebb-tide,
with no ferry available to us,
until sunrise tomorrow.*