Tecla Stabile

***The Three Ravens***

1 There were three ravens sat on a tree,

2 They were as black as they might be.

3 The one of them said to his mate,

4 'Where shall we our breakefast take?'

5 'Downe in yonder greene field,

6 There lies a knight slain under his shield.

7 'His hounds they lie downe at his feete,

8 So well they can their master keepe.

9 'His haukes they flie so eagerly,

10 There's no fowle dare come him nie.'

11 Downe there comes a fallow doe,

12 As great with yong as she might goe.

13 She lift up his bloudy hed,

14 And kist his wounds that were so red.

15 She got him up upon her backe,

16 And carried him to earthen lake.

17 She buried him before the prime,

18 She was dead herselfe ere even-song time.

19 God send every gentleman,

20 Such haukes, such hounds, and such a leman.

C'erano tre corvi appollaiati sull'albero

erano neri come devono essere

allora uno di loro disse ai compagni,

"Dove andremo per colazione?"

Laggiù in quel bel campo verde

sotto allo scudo giace un cavaliere ucciso

i suoi cani gli giacciono ai piedi

e vegliano il loro padrone

I suoi falchi volano con foga

nessun alto uccello osa avvicinarsi

giunge là una cerva maculata

in stato avanzato di gravidanza

Gli alzò la testa insanguinata

e baciò le sue ferite che erano così rosse

poi lo prese sulla sua schiena

e lo portò nella fossa

Lo seppellì avanti l'ora prima

ed era morta anche lei all'ora di compieta

che Dio mandi a ogni gentiluomo

tali falchi, cani e una tale amante.

The ballads is the typical expression of the common people during the middle age. People were illiterate they could neither read nor write therefore their cultural expressions can be find in the “ballad form”. The ballad form was compose by anonymous composer who relied mainly on the sound level because it tends to transmit orally.

The present ballad is made by an anonymous poet.

The ballad is arranged into 10 stanzas and each stanza has 2 verses.

The intelligent reader may understand that there is a regular pattern and that the patter together with the rhyming couplets structure between the second and the fourth verse of each stanza is made with the intention of create the sound level of the ballad.

The topic of the present ballad is the cycle of the life.

The sound –e makes the reading very quick.

The three ravens represent the death.

Their color black is normally associated to the death.

The number three may be a reference to the Parcae, divinities of the pagan culture that ended human’s life when they cut a filaments.

Indeed the pregnant doe may be associate to life, since she is going to create a new life.

In the verse 14 the doe kiss the scars on the knight body like she is trying to reduce his pain.

The ravens that try to eat the knight represents the death that threatens every human.

But the ravens are blocked by the hawk that may be the guardian angels of a human.

Also the dogs may be a sort of guardian angels. To be more exact the dogs may be trusted friends that protect the man on earth as well the hawk protect the man on the sky.

The function of the dogs, the hawks and the lover is highlighted by the anaphor of the word “such” in the last verse.

The message of the ballad is that even if every human will dead God sends in our life people who protect us.

The lover as well as the doe gives to the man or woman a dignified death, in other word the lover brings the woman or the man in heaven.