

## Mad Maudlin's Search

*Tom O' Bedlam is the name of a critically acclaimed anonymous poem written circa 1600 about a former inmate of the Bethlem Royal Hospital for the insane. It was a popular enough ballad that another poem of 25 verses was written in reply, "Mad Maudlin's Search" or "Mad Maudlin's Search for Her Tom of Bedlam" and published in 1720. Folk rock band Steeleye Span set this poem to music on the 1971 album Please to See the King and Jolie Holland recorded a version on her 2004 album Escondida. We don't sing all 25 verses ...*

*For to see Mad Tom of Bedlam  
Ten thousand miles I'd travel  
Mad Maudlin goes on dirty toes  
To save her shoes from gravel*

### Chorus

*Still I sing bonny boys, bonny mad boys  
Bedlam boys are bonny  
For they all go bare, and they live by the air  
And they want no drink nor money*

*I went down to Satan's Kitchen  
To get me food one morning  
And there I got souls piping hot  
All on the spit a-turning*

### Chorus

*{There I picked up a cauldron  
Where boiled ten thousand harlots  
Though full of flame I drank the same  
To the health of all such varlets  
Chorus}*

<more>

This staff has murdered giants  
*And my bag a long knife carries*  
To cut mince pies from children's thighs  
*With which to feed the fairies*  
Chorus

The spirits white as lightning  
*Will on my travels guide me*  
The stars would shake and the moon would quake  
*Whenever they espied me*  
Chorus

{No gypsy, slut nor doxy  
*Shall win my Mad Tom from me*  
I'll weep all night and the stars I'll fight  
*The fray will well become me*  
Chorus}

*And when that I have murdered*  
*The man in the moon to a powder*  
*His staff I'll break and his dog I'll bake*  
*Then howl no demon louder*  
Chorus