

FSC SONGBOOK



THIS SONGBOOK BELONGS TO

A large, empty rectangular box with a thick black border, intended for a self-portrait.

**Please include a self-portrait here for future
identification purposes**

FSC Songbook 2026

Welcome to the 2026 edition of the FSC Songbook. This book is a record of some of the songs and music that form FSC's unique and treasured oral tradition.

To help increase our understanding of our songs, we have included an author and date wherever possible, as well as context notes where we think campers could benefit from some additional information.

Thanks are due to the many, many members of the lodge who have contributed to the making of this songbook.

Happy singing and blue skies!



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Arise Songs

Arise Song 1



Rise, arise, arise
Wake thee arise, life is calling thee
Wake thee arise, ever watchful be
Mother Life God, she is calling thee
Mother Life God, she is greeting thee
Rise, arise, arise



Trad. Zuni

Our most iconic arise song comes from the Zuni people, an indigenous American group from New Mexico. The song comes into the FSC tradition through the founder of the Woodcraft Movement, Ernest Thompson Seton.

Awake, Awake (Arise Song 2)

Awake, awake, the sun is on the hill
The dew is on the grass and you are lying still
Arise, arise for every shadow flies
The morn is in the forests and the dew-washed skies

With the sun awake now
Stir yourself and shake now
Song in every break now
Call you back to life
Awake, awake, The sun is on the hill
The dew is on the grass and you are lying still

Origin unknown



Ain't Gonna Study War



I'm gonna lay down my sword and shield
Down by the riverside, down by the riverside, down by the riverside
I'm gonna lay down my sword and shield
Down by the riverside
I ain't gonna study war no more

*I ain't gonna study war no more, I ain't gonna study war no more
I ain't gonna study war no more
Down by the riverside I'm gonna lay my burdens down
I ain't gonna study war no more*

I'm gonna walk with the Prince of Peace...

I'm gonna put on my long white robe...

I'm gonna lay down my nuclear bombs...

I'm gonna make up my own verses...

Trad. American, early 1800s

An African-American spiritual sung by enslaved people as a work song. The lines about "laying down swords" and "not studying war" reference Isaiah in the Old Testament. The song was an anthem of the US Civil Rights Movement, the struggle to end institutional racial discrimination and segregation in the US.

All Things Shall Perish

1 All things shall per - ish from un - der the sky

2 Mu - sic a - lone shall live mu - sic a - lone shall live

3 Mu - sic a - lone shall live ne - ver shall die



All on the Shore

As I was a-walking all by the seaside

All on the shore and over strand

I met with a body washed up by the tide

All on the shore, a long time ago

I took him to Southrepps the place he was born...

And straight way to Northrepps the place he was known...

I emptied his bowels and pulled out his feet...

And garnished him over with parsley so sweet...

I pulled out his toenails and likewise his teeth...

And sent them to Napton wrapped up in a leaf...

I poked out his eyes with a rusty old nail...

And emptied his giblets out into a pail...

I cut off his legs and likewise his arms...

And then I chopped off all his masculine charms...

I pulled out his liver, his kidneys as well...

Because he was dead! As best I could tell...

The Kipper Family, 1984

Comes to FSC from the repertoire of the Norfolk-based Kipper family, who made their name with an album of spoofs entitled "Arrest These Merry Gentlemen"; the places mentioned in the song are villages in North Norfolk. While this song may indeed be older than its first recording in 1984, it doesn't seem to appear in any historical records.



Anchored in Love

I've found a sweet haven of sunshine at last
And Jesus abiding above
His dear arms around me are lovingly cast
And sweetly He tells of His love

*The tempest is o'er
(The danger, the tempest forever is o'er)
I'm safe evermore
(I'm anchored in hope, I have faith evermore)
What gladness, what rapture is mine
The danger is past
(The water's receding, the danger is past)
I'm anchored at last
(I'm feeling so happy I'm anchored at last)
I'm anchored in love divine*

He saw me endangered and lovingly came
To pilot my storm-beaten soul
Sweet peace He has spoken and bless His dear name
The billows no longer roll

His love shall control me through life and in death
Completely I'll trust to the end
I'll praise Him each hour and my last fleeting breath
Shall sing of my soul's best friend

James Vaughan and James Rowe, USA, 1911

Popularised by the Carter Family in the 1920s. The Carter Family transformed country music from a cultural phenomenon popular with rural audiences to an art form beloved by mainstream America. A P Carter has been criticised for copyrighting traditional songs that he collected and not sharing the resulting royalties with his sources who were often poor, illiterate, and people of colour.



Angels (All Night, All Day)

*All night, all day
Angels watching over me, Lord
All night, all day
Angels watching over me*

Now I lay me down to sleep
Angels watching over me, Lord
Pray the Lord my soul to keep
Angels watching over me

If I die before I wake
Angels watching over me, lord
Pray the Lord my soul to take
Angels watching over me

If I live for ever and a day
Angels watching over me, lord
Pray the lord will guide me away
Angels watching over me

Otis Leon McCoy, c.1940



Angel Band

My latest sun is sinking fast
My race is nearly run
My strongest trials now are past
My triumph is begun

*O come, angel band
Come and around me stand
O bear me away on your snow white wings
To my immortal home
O bear me away on your snow white wings
To my immortal home*

O bear my longing heart to him
Who bled and died for me
Whose blood now cleanses from all sin
And gives me victory

I've almost gained my heavenly home
My spirit loudly sings
The Holy One before me comes
I hear the noise of wings

Jefferson Hascall & William Bradbury, USA, c.1860



Animal Fair



I went to the animal fair
The birds and the beasts were there
The big baboon by the light of the moon
Was combing his auburn hair
The monkey fell out of his bunk
And slid down the elephant's trunk
The elephant sneezed and fell on its knees
And what became of the monkey (monkey, monkey...)?

Trad. American, c. 1898

As I Roved Out

Who are you, me pretty fair maid?
Who are you, me honey?
Who are you, me pretty fair maid?
Who are you, me honey?
She answered me quite modestly
"I am me mammy's darling"

*With your too-ry-ah, fol-di-diddle-dah
Me day-re fol-di-diddle, da-re-oh*

Will you come to me house in the middle of the night
When the moon is shining clearly...
I'll open the door and I'll let you in
And devil the one will hear us

So I went to her house in the middle of the night
When the moon was shining clearly...
She opened the door and she let me in
And devil the one did hear us



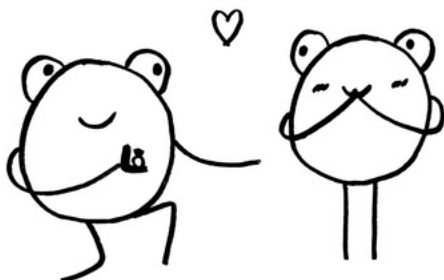
She took me horse by the bridle and the bit
And she led it to the stable...
Saying "There's plenty of oats for a soldier's horse,
To eat if he is able."

She took me by the lily-white hand
And she led me to the table...
Saying "There's plenty of wine for a soldier boy,
To drink if he is able."

She got up and she made the bed
And she made it nice and easy...
Then she took me by the lily-white hand
Saying "hope to God you're able!"

There we lay till the break of the day
And devil the one did hear us...
She arose and put on her clothes
Saying "Darling, you must leave me."

When will I return again
When will we be married...
When broken shells make Christmas bells
We might well get married



Trad. English, c.1810



Ask an Axolotl

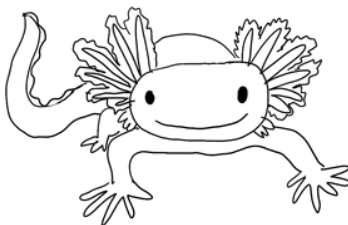
There's an axolotl on the pink stairs
Is an axolotl s'posed to be there?
If you ask an axolotl
If they'll be back tomorrow
A penguin waddles in and then the axolotl's gone

There's an axolotl on the lawn chair
Is an axolotl s'posed to be there?
If you ask an axolotl
If they'll be back tomorrow
A penguin waddles in and then the axolotl's gone

There's an axolotl at the front door
Is that what the welcome sign is there for?
If you ask an axolotl
If they'll be back tomorrow
A penguin waddles in and then they both sing you a song:

Ribble robble, axolotl
Bibble bobble, penguin waddle
We'll see you tomorrow

Ryan Walter & Abby Lyons, USA. 2025



The Auld Triangle

A hungry feeling came o'er me stealing
And the mice they were squealing in my prison cell

*And the auld triangle went jingle jangle
All along the banks of the Royal Canal*

Oh to start the morning, the screw was bawling
Get up you bowsie and clean up your cell

Oh the lags were sleeping, Humpy Gussy was creeping
As I lay there weeping for my girl Sal

On a fine spring evening, the lag lay dreaming
And the seagulls were wheeling high above the wall

The day was dying and the wind was sighing
As I lay crying in my prison cell

Dick Shannon, Ireland, 1952



Based on Dublin's Mountjoy Prison, the "auld triangle" refers to a large metal triangle beaten daily to waken the inmates and signify other points in the prison's routine.



The Ballad of Lou Marsh

In the streets of New York City
When the hour was getting late
There were young men armed with knives and guns
Young men armed with hate
And Lou Marsh stepped between them
And died there in his tracks
For one man is no army, when a city turns its back

*And now the streets are empty, and now the streets are dark
So keep an eye on shadows and never pass the park
For the city is a jungle when the law is out of sight
And death lurks in El Barrio, with the orphans of the night*

There were two gangs approaching
In Spanish Harlem town
The smell of blood was in the air
The challenge was laid down
He felt their blinding hatred
As he tried to save their lives
But they broke his peaceful body
With their fists and staves and knives

Shall Lou Marsh lie forgotten
In a cold and silent grave
Or will his memory linger on
In those he tried to save?
And those of us who knew him
Will now and then recall
And shed a tear on poverty
The tombstone of us all

Phil Ochs, USA, 1963

The Ballad of Lou Marsh was written in 1963 shortly after the murder of black social worker, Louis Marsh, by former gang members of the Untouchables, a street gang in East Harlem, New York. Louis attempted to help the kids in the gang escape violence by establishing a community centre where they could play pool or basketball. Older gang members were angered by this and Louis died in an ensuing fight.



Banks of the Ohio

I asked my love to take a walk
To take a walk, just a little walk
Down beside where the waters flow
Down by the banks of the Ohio

*And only say that you'll be mine
And in no other's arms entwined
Down beside where the waters flow
Down by the banks of the Ohio*

I held a knife against her breast
As close into my arms she pressed
She cried, "Oh Willie, don't you murder me
I'm not prepared for eternity!"

I took her by the lily white hand
And led her down by the water's strand
I picked her up and pitched her in
And watched her body floating by

I wandered home 'twixt twelve and one,
I cried, "My God, what have I done?
I've killed the only woman I loved,
Because she would not be my bride."

Trad. American, 1800s

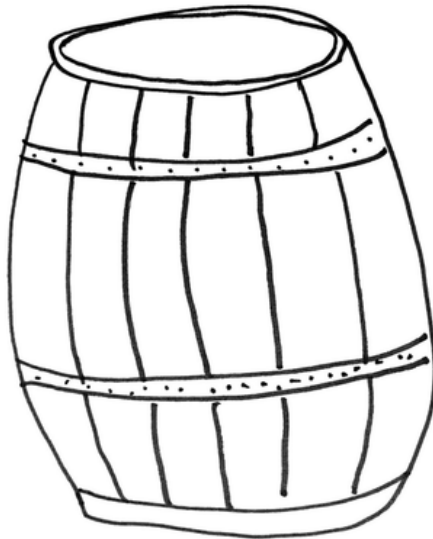
During the 1700s and 1800s, many popular English Broadside ballads took on new forms in the USA. Femicidal murder ballads were a popular genre, perhaps serving the purpose of discouraging young women from going off with men unchaperoned.



Barley Mow

Here's good luck to the half gill
Good luck to the Barley Mow (Oi!)
Jolly good luck to the half gill
Good luck to the Barley Mow
Here's good luck to the half gill
If it's good quality try a little drop more
Here's good luck, good luck to the Barley Mow

Gill pot...
Half pint...
Pint pot...
Half quart...
Quart pot....
Half gallon...
Gallon....
Half barrel...
Barrel...
Dray Horse...
Landlord...



Trad. English, c.1855



Bay of Biscay

My Willy sails on board the tender
And where he is I do not know
For seven long years I've been constantly waiting
Since he crossed the Bay of Biscay-o

One night as Mary lay a-sleeping
A knock came to her bedroom door
Crying arise, arise, my dearest Mary
For to catch one glance of your Willy-o

Young Mary rose, put on her clothing
And to her bedroom door did go
And there she found her Willy standing
His two pale cheeks as white as snow

Oh Willy dear, where are those blushes
Those blushes I knew long years ago?
Oh Mary dear, the cold clay has them
I am only the ghost of your Willy-o

Oh Mary dear, the dawn is coming
Don't you think it's time for me to go?
I am leaving you quite broken-hearted
For to cross the Bay of Biscay-o

If I had all the gold and silver
And all the money in Mexico
I would grant it all to the King of Heaven
If he'd bring me back my Willy-o



Trad. British, c1860



Before I Met You

I thought I had seen pretty girls in my time
But that was before I met you
I never saw one that I wanted for mine
But that was before I met you

*I thought I was swinging the world by the tail
I thought I could never be blue
I thought I'd been kissed and I thought I'd been loved
But that was before I met you*

I wanted to ramble and always be free
But that was before I met you
I said that no sweet thing could ever hold me
But that was before I met you

They tell me I must reap just what I have sown
But darling I hope that's not true
For once I made plans about living alone
But that was before I met you

El Rader and Charles L. Seitz, USA, 1953



Big Rock Candy Mountains

On a summer's day, in the month of May
A burly bum came hiking
Down a shady lane with a sugar cane
He was looking for his liking
As he strolled along, he sang a song
Of the land of milk and honey
Where a bum can stay for many a day
And he don't need any money

*Oh the... buzzin' of the bees in the cigarette trees
The soda-water fountains
Where the lemonade springs, and the bluebird sings
In the Big Rock Candy Mountains*

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains
You never wash your socks
And little streams of alcohol
Come trickling down the rocks
There's a lake of stew and whisky too
And you paddle around in a big canoe
Where they hung the jerk who invented work
In the Big Rock Candy Mountains

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains
The cops have wooden legs
The bulldogs all have rubber teeth
And the hens lay soft-boiled eggs
The farmers' trees are full of fruit, the barns are full of hay
I want to go where there ain't no snow
Where the rain don't fall and the wind don't blow
In the Big Rock Candy Mountains

Harry McClintock, USA, 1928



Big Yellow Taxi

They paved paradise
And put up a parking lot
With a pink hotel, a boutique
And a swinging hot spot

*Don't it always seem to go
That you don't know what you've got
Till it's gone
They paved paradise
And put up a parking lot*

They took all the trees
Put 'em in a tree museum
And they charged the people
A dollar and a half just to see 'em

Hey farmer farmer
Put away that DDT now
Give me spots on my apples
But leave me the birds and the bees
Please!

Late last night
I heard the screen door slam
And a big yellow taxi
Took away my old man



Joni Mitchell, USA, c. 1967



Black Velvet Band

In a neat little town they called Belfast
Apprenticed to trade I was bound
And many an hour's sweet happiness
Have I spent in that neat little town
A bad misfortune came over me
Which caused me to stray from the land
Far away from my friends and relations
Betrayed by the Black Velvet Band

*Her eyes they shone like diamonds
I thought her the queen of the land
And her hair it hung over her shoulder
Tied up with a black velvet band*

I took a stroll down Broadway
Meaning not long for to stay
When who should I see but a pretty fair maid
Come tripping along the pathway
She was both fair and handsome
Her neck it was just like a swan's
And her hair it hung over her shoulder
Tied up with a black velvet band

I took a stroll with this pretty fair maid
And a gentleman passing us by
I knew she meant a doing for him
By the look in her roguish black eye
His watch she took from his pocket
And placed it right into me hand
And the very next thing that I said was
"Bad luck to the Black Velvet Band"



Before the judge and the jury
Next morning I had to appear
The judge he said to me: "Young man
Your case it is proven clear
I'll give you seven years penal servitude
To be spent right away from the land
Far away from your friends and relations
Betrayed by the Black Velvet Band"

So come all you jolly young fellows
A warning take by me
When you are out on the town, me lads
Beware of the pretty colleens
They'll treat you to strong drink, me boys
Till you are not able to stand
And the very next thing that you know is
You've landed in Van Diemen's Land

Trad. Irish, c.1796



Black velvet bands were worn by mourning widows but also by ladies of the night to advertise their services. This song was popular among both English and Irish sailors, and also in East Anglia in the 19th century where many Irish travelled to work draining the fens.



Blackleg Miner

It's in the evening, after dark
The blackleg miner gangs to work
In his moleskin pants and dirty shirt
There goes the blackleg miner

*So join the union while you may
Don't wait till your dying day
For that may not be far away
You dirty blackleg miner*

He takes his pick and down he goes
To hew the coal that lies below
There's not a woman in this town row
Would look at a blackleg miner

For Delaval is a terrible place
They rub wet clay in a blackleg's face
Around the pits they run a foot race
To catch the blackleg miner

And don't go near the Seghill mine
Across the top they've stretched a line
To catch the throat and break the spine
Of the dirty blackleg miner

Well they take his pick and duds as well
And they hurl them down the pit of hell
So off you go and fare thee well
You dirty blackleg miner

Trad. English, c.1844

"Blackleg" refers to a strike-breaker, someone hired by the owner of a mine or factory to work while union members were on strike for better pay or conditions. Blacklegs were often brought in from distant parts of the country to ensure they had no ties to the striking community. Coal mines were some of the most heavily unionised industries in the country, and this song represents the unflinching attitude towards strike-breakers held by mining communities. Seaton Delaval and Seghill are villages in Northumbria.



Blessed Motion

I believed in solid ground
Until I saw the earth in motion
In the winds of steady change
And in the ever-rolling ocean

All moves on in perfect, perfect motion
All is change and ever-rolling ocean

All is moving, all is change
Though I once believed that there
Might somehow be something firm beneath my feet, but
All is motion, and all is well for solid ground is just a myth
For those who never swim in it
All is moving in blessed change, o the world we know
Will come and go and everything will rearrange, so
Be the ground beneath that sky
Tumbling round the by and by
All is change, so am I. Lye lye lye, lye lye lye

Annie Zylstra, USA, c. 2020



This song is partially inspired by a quote from Martin Prechtel after surviving the Guatemala earthquake of 1976, during which he witnessed the ground beneath him rising up and swallowing people and villages whole: “solid ground is a myth believed by people who live on the earth rather than in it.”



Blood and Gold

On rides a captain and three hundred soldier boys
Out of the morning mist and through the silent snow
Whistling gaily rides the captain at their head
Behind him soldier boys sadly weeping go

For when you took my gold and swore to follow me
You sold away your lives and your liberty
No more you'll till the soil, no more you'll work the land
No more to the dance you'll go and take girls by the hand

*Oh mother we-e-e-ep for your son
He is gone to kill and die*

You'll weep, you'll die by the keen edge of the sword
All along by the muddy Danube shore
He gave the order for the drummers to beat their drums
That mothers all might know the life a soldier lives

Unfurl your ragged banners and raise your pale young face
You'll all go in the fire, there'll be no hiding place
Oh mother hear the drumbeat in the village square
Oh mother the drums for me to go for a soldier there

*Mothers, sisters, wi-i-i-ives, weep for us
Marked as Cain we die alone*

Andy Irvine and Jane Cassidy 1980

Blow the Man Down

Oh! Blow the man down, bullies, blow the man down!

Way ay! Blow the man down!

Oh! Blow the man down, bullies, blow him away

Gimme me some time to blow the man down

As I was a-walking down Paradise Street

Way ay! Blow the man down!

A saucy young damsel I happened to meet

Gimme me some time to blow the man down

I says to her "Polly, and how do you do?"

Way ay! Blow the man down!

She says, "None the better for seeing of you"

Gimme me some time to blow the man down

Oh! We'll blow the man up and we'll blow the man down

Way ay! Blow the man down!

We'll blow him away into Liverpool Town

Gimme me some time to blow the man down

Trad. halyard shanty, c.1860

Dating from the end of the US Civil War, when the American and British navies were competing to build bigger, faster ships. A different shanty rhythm was needed to accompany work on the new style of rigging.



Blowin' in the Wind

How many roads must a man walk down
Before you call him a man?
How many seas must a white dove sail
Before she sleeps in the sand?
How many times must the cannonballs fly
Before they're forever banned?

*The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind
The answer is blowin' in the wind*

How many times can a man look up
Before he can see the sky?
How many ears must one man have
Before he can hear people cry?
How many deaths will it take till he knows
That too many people have died?

How many years can a mountain exist
Before it is washed to the sea?
How many years can some people exist
Before they're allowed to be free?
How many times can a man turn his head
Pretending that he just doesn't see?

Bob Dylan, USA, 1962

Bob Dylan cited the African-American spirituals "No More Auction Block" and "We Shall Overcome" as musical influences.



Bold Riley

Oh the rain it rains all day long
Bold Riley-o Bold Riley
And the northern wind it blows so strong
Bold Riley-o has gone away

*Goodbye my sweetheart, goodbye my dear-o
Bold Riley-o, Bold Riley
Goodbye my darling, goodbye my dear-o
Bold Riley-o has gone away*

The anchor's weighed and the rags we've all set
Bold Riley-o Bold Riley
Them Liverpool judies we'll never forget
Bold Riley-o has gone away

Well come on Mary, don't look glum
Bold Riley-o, Bold Riley
Come White-stockings Day you'll be drinkin' rum
Bold Riley-o has gone away

We're outward bound for the Bengal Bay
Bold Riley-o, Bold Riley
Get bending me lads, it's a hell of a way
Bold Riley-o has gone away

Trad. halyard shanty, 1800s

'White-stockings Day' was the day each month when a sailor's female relatives dressed up in their best clothes to collect his half-pay or 'allotment'. However, not all sailors made provision for the women to collect this allotment, preferring to take a larger advance payment for themselves.



Bonny at Morn

The sheep's in the meadow and the kye's in the corn
Thou's ower lang in thy bed, bonny at morn
The sheep's in the meadow and the kye's in the corn
Thou's ower lang in thy bed, bonny at morn

*Canny at night, bonny at morn,
Thou's ower long in thy bed, bonny at morn*

The bird is in the nest and the trout is in the burn,
Thou hinders thy mother at many a turn

We're all a'laid idle wi' keeping the bairn
The lad winnot work and the lass winnot learn

Trad. English, c. 1800

'Thou's ower lang in thy bed' means 'You're staying in bed too long!' This traditional Northumbrian folk song contains several other North-Eastern English words: 'kye', meaning 'cow'; 'canny', meaning 'pleasant'; and 'bairn', meaning 'baby'.



Bread and Roses

As we go marching, marching, in the beauty of the day
A million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill lofts grey
Are touched with all the radiance, a sudden sun discloses
For the people hear us singing, bread and roses, bread and roses

As we go marching, marching, we battle too, for men
For they are women's children and our victory is their gain
Our days shall not be sweated from birth until life closes
Hearts starve as well as bodies, give us bread, but give us roses

As we go marching, marching, un-numbered women dead
Go crying through our singing in their ancient call for bread
Small art and love and beauty their trudging spirits knew
Oh, it is bread we fight for, but we fight for roses, too

As we go marching, marching, the future hears our call
For the rising of the women is the rising of us all
No more the drudge, the idler, ten that toil where one reposes
But a sharing of life's glories, bread and roses, bread and roses



Helen Todd, Martha Coleman, James Oppenheim, USA, 1912

The 1912 Massachusetts textile workers strike began after immigrant women's hours and pay were cut. They lived in terrible conditions: half of all children died before they reached the age of 6, and during the strike hungry children were sent to sympathetic families in other states. It defied the contemporary assumptions that immigrant, largely female and ethnically divided workers could not be organised: Mill owners were forced to settle the "Bread and Roses" strike by giving workers raises.

Break 'em On Down

1 Break 'em on down break 'em on down break 'em on down these walls be-tw-een us

2 Break _____ 'em on down Break 'em on down these walls be tw-een us

3 Break. these wa - lls Break. these wa - lls down



Bright Morning Star

Bright morning star a-rising
Bright morning star a-rising
Bright morning star a-rising
Day is a-breaking in my soul

Oh where are our dear sisters?
Oh where are our dear sisters?
They have gone to heaven a-shouting
Day is a-breaking in my soul

Oh where are our dear brothers?
Oh where are our dear brothers?
They are down in the valley a-praying
Day is a-breaking in my soul

Oh where are our dear mothers?
Oh where are our dear mothers?
They have gone to heaven a-shouting
Day is a-breaking in my soul

Oh where are our dear children?
Oh where are our dear children?
They are down in the valley playing
Day is a-breaking in my soul

Bright morning star a-rising...
Day is a-breaking in my soul



Trad. American Spiritual, c.1930



Bring Me Little Water Sylvie

Bring me little water Sylvie
Bring me little water now
Bring me little water Sylvie
Every little once in a while

Bring it in a bucket Sylvie
Bring it in a bucket now
Bring it in a bucket Sylvie
Every little once in a while

Sylvie come a runnin'
Bucket in her hand
I will bring a little water
Fast as I can

Bring me little water Sylvie
Bring me little water now
Bring me little water Sylvie
Every little once in a while

Can't you see me comin'?
Can't you see me now?
I will bring a little water
Every little once in a while
Every little once in a while



Trad. American spiritual, late 1800s



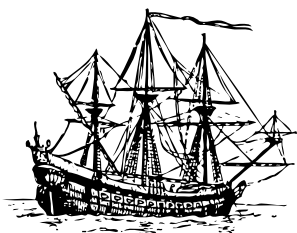
Broadside to Broadside

Keep your land you gentry of England, France and Spain
For there's nothing like dominion of the water
From the rocky coast of Kerry to the bloody Spanish Main
It's the best thing you can ever teach your daughter

*Broadside to broadside, two captains collide
Queen of the spheres and queen of the tide
Regalia and rebellion go sailing side by side
Haul away, sister, haul away*

Plunder men for treasure, and never heed their blows
For there's nothing given freely to a woman
Be generous to friendship and lavish to your foes
Then pirate queens may share the seas in common

For blows will make you weary and marriage make a slave
You'd be better on the sea like brave O'Malley
And when that gallant vessel goes a rolling on the wave
Be sure you're on the deck not in the galley



Nancy Kerr, UK, 2014

Inspired by the 1593 meeting of Irish noblewoman Gráinne Ní Mháille (Grace O'Malley) and Queen Elizabeth I. The Ní Mháille clan of West Ireland became wealthy extorting 'black rents' from fishermen and other ships passing by the Irish Coast, which has led to Gráinne being remembered as a "pirate queen". Gráinne Ní Mháille spent much of her life leading armies and fleets in resisting the expanding power of the English in Ireland. She eventually travelled to the court of Elizabeth to surrender and plead for the life of several members of her family.



The Burning of Auchindoun

As I gaed doon by Fiddichside
On a May mornin'
I met wi' Willie Macintosh
An 'oor before the dawnin'

Turn again, turn again
Turn again I beg ye
If ye burn Auchindoun
Huntly he will heid ye

Heid me or hang me
It will never grieve me
I will burn Auchindoun
Although the life 'ud leave me

As I gaed doon by Fiddichside
On a May mornin'
Auchindoun was in a bleeze
An 'oor before the dawnin'

Crawin', crawin'
For a' yer crouse crawin'
Ye've burnt yer crops an' tint yer wings
An 'oor before the dawnin'



Trad. Scots, 1700

Sung in the Scots language, this song details the historical sack of the castle of Auchindoun in 1592, the culmination of a bloody feud that formed part of the wider conflicts over the union of the Scottish and English crowns.



Byker Hill

If I had another penny
I would have another gill
I would make the piper play
The bonny lass of Byker Hill

Byker Hill and Walker Shore, collier lads for ever more
Byker Hill and Walker Shore, collier lads for ever more

The pitman and the keelman trim
They drink bumble made from gin
Then to dance they do begin
To the tune of *Elsie Marley*

When first I went down to the dirt
I had no cowl nor no pitshirt
Now I've gotten two or three
Oh, Walker Pit's done well by me

Geordie Charlton had a pig
He hit it with a shovel and it danced a jig
All the way to Walker Shore
To the tune of *Elsie Marley*

All them lads from Walker Shore
Drink half a pint then eighteen more
All along they rant and roar
To the tune of *Elsie Marley*

Trad. English, c.1810

Elsie Marley is the name of a well known country dance from Tyneside in the North of England where this miner's song originates. A pitman worked in a mine digging coal, and a keelman worked on the barges that transported the coal along rivers and canals.



Campfire's Burning



Campfire's burning, campfire's burning
Draw nearer, draw nearer
In the gloaming, in the gloaming
Come sing and be merry



Origin Unknown

Captain Don't You Know Me?

Captain, don't you know me, don't you know my name?
Captain, don't you know me, don't you know my name?
Well the name is the same whatever the game
And the game's got the same old name
You're the same old rascal stole my watch and chain
And that's the name of the game

Origin Unknown



Careless Love

Love, oh love, oh careless love
Love, oh love, oh careless love
Love, oh love, oh careless love
Can't you see what careless love can do

Sorrow, sorrow to my heart...
That my true love and I must part

When my apron strings did bow...
You followed me through sleet and snow

Now my apron strings won't pin...
You pass my door and won't come in

Cried last night and the night before...
Gonna cry tonight and never no more

Love my mamma and my poppa too...
But I'd leave them both to go with you

How I wish that train would come...
And take me back to where I come from

Love, oh love, oh careless love...
Can't you see what careless love can do

Trad. American, 1800s

The narrator's apron strings will no longer "pin" because she is pregnant - other versions of the song include lyrics which make this more explicit. In the early 1800s, unplanned pregnancy would have been a disaster for the woman and child: for many the only choice would have been to give their child to a foundling hospital and then attempt to regain respectability and work, or to go to a workhouse where infant mortality rates often exceeded 90%.



Chicken on a Raft

The skipper's in the ward room drinking gin

Hey ho, chicken on a raft

I don't mind knocking but I ain't going in

Hey ho, chicken on a raft

The Jimmy's laughing like a drain

Hey ho, chicken on a raft

Been looking in me comic cuts again

Hey ho, chicken on a raft

Oh, chicken on a raft on a Monday morning

Oh what a terrible sight to see

Dabtoe's for'ard and the dustman's aft

Sitting here picking at a chicken on a raft

Hey ho, chicken on a raft, Hi ho, chicken on a raft

Hey ho, chicken on a raft, Hi ho, chicken on a raft

Well they gave me the middle and the forenoon too

And now I'm pulling in a whaler's crew

There's a seagull laughing overhead

Hope to be floating in a feather bed

We kissed goodbye on the midnight bus

But she didn't cry and she didn't fuss

Am I the one that she loves best?

Or am I just a cuckoo in another man's nest?

Well I had a little girl in Donnerbie

And did she make a fool of me

Her heart was like a purser's shower

From hot to cold in a quarter of an hour



Original by Cyril Tawney, UK, 1958

"Chicken on a raft" is a reference to the unpopular breakfast dish served on Royal Navy submarines consisting of fried egg on fried bread. "Dabtoes" = seamen; "dustmen" = coal engine stokers.



Chickens

We had some chickens - no eggs would they lay
We had some chickens - no eggs would they lay
So I said honey, this sure ain't funny
We're losing money; no eggs would they lay

One day a rooster crept into our yard
And caught those chickens right off of their guard
They're laying eggs now just like they used to
Ever since that rooster crept into our yard

We had some moo-cows - no milk would they give
We had some moo-cows - no milk would they give
So, I said honey, this sure ain't funny
We're losing money; no milk would they give

One day a rooster (with a milking-stool) crept into our yard
And caught those moo-cows right off of their guard
They're giving egg nog instead of milk now
Ever since that rooster crept into our yard

We had some elephants - no tusks would they grow
We had some elephants - no tusks would they grow
So I said honey, this sure ain't funny
We're losing money; no tusks would they grow

One day a rooster (with a step-ladder) crept into our yard
And caught those elephants right off of their guard
They're laying eggs now of solid ivory
Ever since that rooster crept into our yard



We had a tractor - it just wouldn't go
We had a tractor - it just wouldn't go
So I said honey, this sure ain't funny
We're losing money; it just wouldn't go

One day a rooster (with a spanner) crept into our yard
And caught that tractor right off of its guard
Now it goes EGGsactly just like it used to
Ever since that rooster crept into our yard

We had some scientists - they just wouldn't work
We had some scientists - they just wouldn't work
So I said honey, this sure ain't funny
We're losing money; they just wouldn't work

One day a rooster (with a test-tube) crept into our yard
And caught those scientists right off of their guard
They're doing EGGsperiments just like they used to
Ever since that rooster crept into our yard

Boyce David, USA, 1968



Children Go Where I Send Thee

Children go where I send thee
How shall I send thee?
Well I'm gonna send thee one by one
One for the itty-bitty baby
Was born, born, born, born, born in Bethlehem

Children go where I send thee
How shall I send thee?
Well I'm gonna send thee two by two
Two for the Paul and Silas...

Three for the Hebrew Children...

Four for the four that stood at the door...

Five for the five that got out alive...

Six for the six that never got a fix...

Seven for the seven that went up to heaven...

Eight for the eight that stood at the gate...

Nine for the nine who looked so fine...

Ten for the ten commandments...



Trad. African American Spiritual, c.1900

First recorded in the 1930s but likely with much older origins. This popular spiritual is thought by some to be derived from the much older English song "Green Grow The Rushes-O" because of its cumulative structure. It is often impossible, however, to definitively say how and when folk songs emerge.



Clementine

In a cavern, in a canyon, excavating for a mine
Dwelt a miner, forty-niner and his daughter Clementine

*Oh my darling, Oh my darling
Oh my darling Clementine
You are lost and gone forever
Dreadful sorry, Clementine*

Light she was and like a fairy and her shoes were number nine
Herring boxes without topses, sandals were for Clementine

Drove she ducklings to the water every morning just at nine
Stubbed her toe against a splinter, fell into the foaming brine

Ruby lips above the water, blowing bubbles soft and fine
But alas I was no swimmer, so I lost my Clementine

How I missed her, how I missed her
How I missed my Clementine
'Til I kissed her little sister and forgot my Clementine



Percy Montrose, USA, 1884



Cockles and Mussels

In ^CDublin's fair city where the ^Ggirls are so pretty

I ^Cfirst set my eyes on sweet ^GMolly Malone

As she ^Cwheeled her wheelbarrow

Through ^Gstreets broad and narrow

Crying ^C"^FCockles and ^CMussels, ^{F C}alive ^Galive ^Coh!"

^CAlive ^Galive oh, ^Galive alive oh

Crying ^C"^FCockles and ^CMussels, ^{F C}alive ^Galive ^Coh!"

She was a fishmonger, but sure 'twas no wonder

For so were her father and mother before

And they each wheeled their barrow

Through streets broad and narrow

Crying "Cockles and Mussels, alive alive oh!"

She died of a fever and no one could save her

And that was the end of sweet Molly Malone

Now her ghost wheels her barrow

Through streets broad and narrow

Crying "Cockles and Mussels, alive alive oh!"

James Yorkston, Scotland, 1876

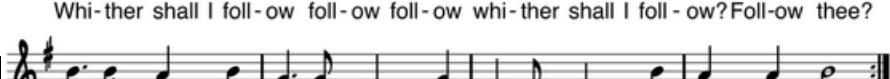


Come Follow



1 
Come foll - ow foll - ow foll - ow foll - ow foll - ow foll - ow me

2 
Whi-ther shall I foll - ow foll - ow foll - ow whi-ther shall I foll - ow? Foll - ow thee?

3 
To the green - wood, to the green - wood, to the green - wood green wood tree

John Hilton, England, c.1652

Come Landlord Fill the Flowing Bowl

Here's to the man drinks water pure and goes to bed quite sober
Here's to the man drinks water pure and goes to bed quite sober
Falls as the leaves do fall, falls as the leaves do fall, falls as the leaves do fall
He'll die before October

*Come Landlord fill the flowing bowl until it doth run over...
For tonight we'll merry merry be...
Tomorrow we'll be sober*

Here's to the man who drinks strong ale and goes to bed quite mellow
Lives as he ought to live...
And dies a jolly good fellow

Here's to the maid who steals a horse and runs to tell her mother
She's a foolish foolish thing...
She'll never steal another

Here's to the maid who steals a horse and moves to a new county
She'll get rich from horse stealing...
And soon be worth a bounty

Trad. English, 1800s.



Come To The Colours Tommy, Come



Come to the co-lours To-mmy come Come to the co lours Tommy come



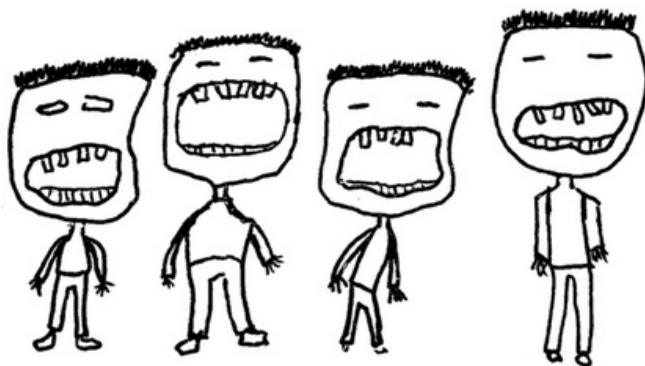
Stay with me stay with me don't go stay with me stay with me don't go (no I)



Don't want to leave you but I think I must go (no I)

Nico Brown, UK, 1987

FSC's Nico Brown wrote this about Tommy Atkins, the Unknown Soldier, for a BBC production.



Country Life

*I like to rise when the sun she rises, early in the morning
And I like to hear them small birds singing
Merrily upon their laylum
And hurrah for the life of a country boy
And to ramble in the new mown hay*

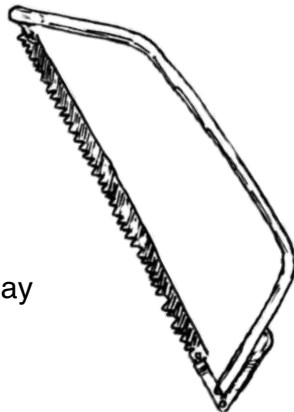
In spring we sow, at the harvest mow
And that is how the seasons round they go
Oh but of all the times if choose I may
'Twould be rambling in the new mown hay

In summer when the sun is hot
We sing, we dance, and we drink a lot
We spend all night in sport and play
And go rambling in the new mown hay

In autumn when the oak trees turn
We gather all the wood that's fit to burn
We cut and stash and stow away
And go rambling in the new mown hay

In winter when the sky turns grey
We hedge and we ditch our lives away
But in the summer when the sun shines gay
We go rambling in the new mown hay

Oh Nancy is my darling gay
And she blooms like the flowers every day
But I love her best in the month of May
When we're rambling in the new mown hay



Trad English, 1800s

Laylum means a chorus or a group of birds singing, according to the Watersons who popularised this song. Although based on a 19th century folk song this version is largely a product of evolution since the 1970s with verses being added by various singers and by FSC.



Crazy Moose

There was a crazy moose (there was a crazy moose)
Who liked to drink a lot of juice (who liked to drink a lot of juice)
There was a crazy moose (there was a crazy moose)
Who liked to drink a lot of juice (who liked to drink a lot of juice)

Singing way-o, way-o (singing way-o, way-o)

Way-o, way-o, way-o way-o (way-o, way-o, way-o, way-o)

Way-o, way-o (way-o, way-o)

Way-o, way-o, way-o, way-o (way-o, way-o, way-o, way-o)

The moose's name was Fred.
He liked to drink his juice in bed.

He drank his juice with ease,
Until he spilled some on his knees.

He drank his juice with care,
Until he spilled some on his hair.

He drank his juice with class,
Until he spilled some on his ass.



Origin unknown



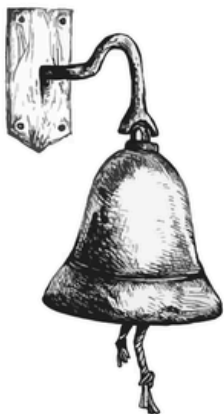
Crossing the Bar

Sunset and evening star, and one clear call for me
And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea
When I put out to sea, when I put out to sea
And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea

But such a tide as moving seems asleep
Too full for sound and foam
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home...

Twilight and evening bell
And after that the dark
And may there be no sadness or farewell
When I embark...

For though from out our bourne of time and place
The flood may bear me far
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar...



Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 1889; Rani Arbo, 1990s



Cutty Wren

O Where are you going? says Milder to Malder
O I cannot tell you, says Festel to Foes
We're off to the woods, says John the Red Nose
We're off to the woods, says John the Red Nose

O what will you do there? says Milder to Malder
O we may not tell you, says Festel to Foes
We'll hunt the Cutty Wren, says John the Red Nose...

O how will you shoot her? says Milder to Malder
O we may not tell you, says Festel to Foes
With bows and with arrows, says John the Red Nose...

O that will not do? says Milder to Malder
O what will we do then, says Festel to Foes
Big guns and big cannons, says John the Red Nose...

With what will you cut her up? says Milder to Malder
O I cannot tell you says Festel to Fose
With knives and with forks, says John the Red Nose...

O that will not do? says Milder to Malder
O what will do then, says Festel to Fose
Big hatchets and cleavers, says John the Red Nose...

O who'll have the spare ribs? says Milder to Malder
O I cannot tell you says Festel to Fose
We'll give them all to the poor, says John the Red Nose...

Trad. English, 1300s-1700s

The meaning and date of origin are disputed. Some hold that this is an 18th century song which tells of a traditional Boxing Day practice of hunting and killing wrens. Others think it dates to the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, and the cutty (or small) wren is a reference to the child king, Richard II.



Dark as a Dungeon

Come all you young fellows so brave and so fine
And seek not your fortune way down in the mine
It will form as a habit and seep in your soul
Till the streams of your blood run as black as the coal

*For it's dark as a dungeon and dank as the dew
Where the dangers are double
And the pleasures are few
Where the rain never falls and the sun never shines
It's as dark as a dungeon way down in the mine*

There's many a man I have known in my day
Who has lived just to labour his whole life away
Like the fiend for his dope or the drunkard his wine
A man will have lust for the lure of the mine

The morning, the evening, the middle of the day
They're the same to the miner who labours away
And the one who's not careful will never survive
One fall of the slate and you're buried alive

I hope when I die and the ages shall roll
That my body will blacken, and turn into coal
As I look from the door of my heavenly home
I'll pity the miner a slave to my bones

Merle Travis, USA, 1946



Deep Blue Sea

Deep blue sea, Willie, deep blue sea
Deep blue sea, Willie, deep blue sea
Deep blue sea, Willie, deep blue sea
It was Willie what got drowned in the deep blue sea

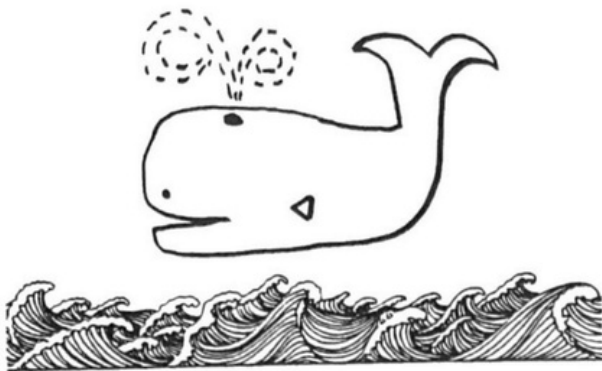
Dig his grave with a silver spade...
It was Willie what got drowned in the deep blue sea

Sew his shroud with a silken thread...
It was Willie what got drowned in the deep blue sea

Lower him down on a golden chain...
It was Willie what got drowned in the deep blue sea

Deep blue sea, Willie, deep blue sea...
It was Willie what got drowned in the deep blue sea

Trad. American, 1800s



Recorded in the 1950s by Pete Seeger, who commented in the notes that 'Like many an American song, this seems to have been built out of a fragment of an old English ballad or sea song'. Folklorists have reflected that the tune sounds like it also has Caribbean influence.



Deportees

The crops are all in and the peaches are rotting
Oranges are piled in their creosote dumps
They're flying them back to the Mexican Border
To pay all their money to wade back again

*Goodbye to my Juan, farewell Rosalita
Adios mis amigos, Jesus y Maria
You won't have a name when you ride the big airplane
All they will call you will be deportees*

My father's own father he waded that river
Spent all the money he'd made in his life
My brothers and sisters are working your fruit trees
And they rode the truck till they laid down and died

The airplane caught fire over Los Gatos canyon
A fireball of lightning that shook all our hills
Who are these friends who are scattered like dry leaves?
Radio says they are "Just deportees"

Some of us are illegal and some are not wanted
Our work contract's out and we have to move on
Six hundred miles to the Mexico border
They chase us like outlaws, like rustlers, like thieves

We died in your hills, we died in your deserts
We died in your valleys and died on your plains
We died 'neath your trees, we died in your bushes
Both sides of the river, we died just the same

Is this the best way we can farm our great orchards?
Is this the best way we can pick our fresh fruit?
Employing cheap labour from over the border
Labour the radio calls deportees

Woody Guthrie, USA, 1948

After the Los Gatos plane crash of 1948, in which 32 people died, Guthrie was inspired to write this protest song by the fact that the newspaper reports named the four white staff and crew, but referred to the 28 dead passengers merely as "deportees".



The Digger's Song (Trad.)

You noble diggers all, stand up now, stand up now
You noble diggers all, stand up now
The waste land to maintain, seeing Cavaliers by name
Your digging does disdain, and persons all defame
Stand up now, diggers all

Your houses they pull down, stand up now, stand up now
Your houses they pull down, stand up now
Your houses they pull down, to fright poor men in town
But the gentry must come down, and the poor shall wear the crown
Stand up now, diggers all

With spades and hoes and ploughs, stand up now, stand up now
With spades and hoes and ploughs, stand up now
Your freedom to uphold, seeing Cavaliers are bold
To kill you if they could, and rights from you to hold
Stand up now, diggers all

The lawyers they conjoin, stand up now, stand up now
The lawyers they conjoin, stand up now
To arrest you they advise, such fury they devise
The Devil in them lies, and hath blinded both their eyes
Stand up now, diggers all

To conquer them by love, come in now, come in now
To conquer them by love, come in now
To conquer them by love, as it does you behove
For he is King Above, no power is like to love
Glory here, diggers all

Trad. English, c.1648



The Digger's Song (World Turned Upside Down)

In 1649 to St. George's Hill,
A ragged band they called the Diggers
Came to show the people's will
They defied the landlords, they defied the laws
They were the dispossessed reclaiming what was theirs

"We come in peace" they said, "to dig and sow
We come to work the land in common
And to make the waste lands grow
This earth divided, we will make whole
So it will be a common treasury for all"

"The sin of property, we do disdain
No man has any right to buy and sell
The earth for private gain
By theft and murder they took the land
Now everywhere the walls spring up at their command"

"They make the laws, to chain us well
The clergy dazzle us with heaven
Or they damn us into hell
We will not worship the god they serve
The god of greed who feeds the rich while poor folk starve"

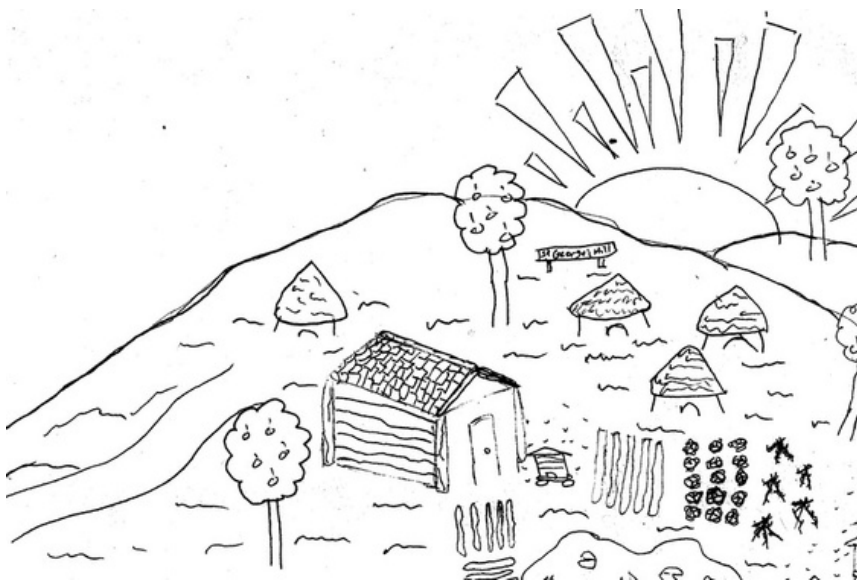
"We work we eat together, we need no swords
We will not bow to the masters
Or pay rent to the lords
Yes we are free, though we are poor
You Diggers all, stand up for glory, stand up now"



From the men of property, the orders came
They sent the hired men and troopers
To wipe out the Diggers' claim
Tear down their cottages, destroy their corn
They were dispersed, but still the vision lingers on

You poor take courage, you rich take care
This earth was made a common treasury
For everyone to share
All things in common, all people one
We come in peace; the orders came to cut them down

Leon Rosselson, UK, 1975



The Diggers, known at the time as the “True Levellers”, were a radical group active during the English Civil War, who occupied unused land and farmed it cooperatively. The Diggers were reacting against the enclosure of the common land, a process in which aristocrats seized and fenced off public land for their own private use, displacing people who had relied on the land to farm and rear livestock. Leon Rosselson’s song is not related to the much older Digger’s song, which some believe was written by Gerald Winstanley, the group’s leader.



Dirty Old Town



^A I met my ^Dlove by the gasworks wall
^G Dreamed a ^Ddream by the old canal
^G Kissed my ^Dgirl by the factory wall
^A Dirty old town, ^{Bm}dirty old town

I heard the siren from the docks
Saw a train set the night on fire
Smelled the spring on the smoky air
Dirty old town, dirty old town

The clouds are drifting across the moon
Cats are prowling on their beat
Springs a girl in the street at night
Dirty old town, dirty old town

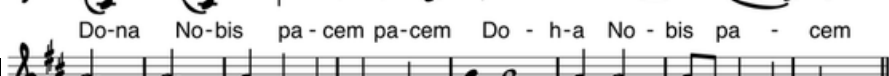
I'm going to take a good sharp axe
Shining steel tempered in the fire
We'll chop you down like an old dead tree
Dirty old town, dirty old town

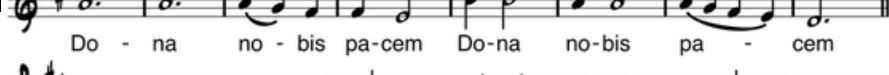
Ewan MacColl, UK, 1949

Reflecting on the UK's industrial heritage, this song was written about Salford in Lancashire: a major textile manufacturing town in the 18th and 19th centuries. By the time the song was written in 1949, Salford had already lost its traditional industries, leaving economic depression and social deprivation in its wake.

Dona Nobis Pacem

1 
Do-na No-bis pa-cem pa-cem Do - h-a No - bis pa - cem

2 
Do - na no - bis pa-cem Do-na no-bis pa - cem


Do - na no - b-is pa-cem Do-na no-bis pa - cem



Doffing Mistress

Oh do you know her or do you not
This new doffing mistress we have got?
Elsie Thompson it is her name
And she helps her doffers at every frame

Fol de ri fol ra
Fol de ri fol ray

On Monday morning when she comes in
She hangs her coat on the highest pin.
Turns around just to greet her friends,
Crying, "Hi, doffers, tie up your ends!"

Some times the boss he looks in the door
"Tie your ends up, doffers," he will roar
Tie our ends up we surely do
For Elsie Thompson but not for you

Yes tie our ends up we surely do
For Elsie Thompson but not for you
We'll tie our ends up and we'll leave our frames
And we'll wait for Elsie to return again

Trad, Northern Ireland, 1800s

This song comes from the textile mills of Northern Ireland. Mills were mostly worked by women and girls, some as young as nine. A doffing mistress would supervise the mill's doffers, workers whose work involved darting in and out of operating machinery. This was dangerous work, both because of the risk of being crushed and the high chance of lung disease from the small bits of lint that filled the air. Doffers spent most of the day in a hunched position, and because of this many doffers struggled to stand up straight - the doffing mistress hanging her coat on the highest peg is an act of kindness.



Donna Donna

On a wagon bound for market
There's a calf with a mournful eye
High above him there's a swallow
Winging swiftly through the sky

*Now the winds are laughing
They laugh with all their might
Laugh and laugh the whole day through
And half the summer's night (singing softly)
Donna, donna, donna, donna
Donna, donna, donna, do
Donna, donna, donna, donna
Donna, donna, donna, do*

“Stop complaining” said the farmer
“Who asked you a calf to be?
Why don't you have wings to fly with
Like the swallow so proud and free?”

Calves are easily bound and slaughtered
Never knowing the reason why
But whoever treasures freedom
Like the swallow must learn to fly

Aaron Zeitlin, 1940

Originally written in Yiddish, with “Donna, Donna” being a slight corruption of the phrase “Dana, Dana”, a common refrain in Polish and Yiddish folk songs. The song uses the metaphor of a calf to lament the pogroms and genocide suffered by Jewish people in Central and Eastern Europe in the first half of the 20th century.



Down in the Valley

Down in the valley, the valley so low
Hang your head over, hear the winds blow
Hear the winds blow, love, hear the winds blow
Hang your head over, hear the winds blow

Roses love sunshine, violets love dew
Angels in heaven, know I love you
Know I love you, love, know I love you
Angels in heaven, know I love you

If you don't love me, love who you please
Put your arms round me, give my heart ease
Give my heart ease, love, give my heart ease
Put your arms round me, give my heart ease

Build me a castle forty feet high
Where I can see her, as she rides by
As she rides by love, as she rides by
Where I can see her as she rides by

Write me a letter, send it by mail
Send it in care of the Birmingham Jail
Birmingham Jail, love, Birmingham Jail
Send it in care of the Birmingham Jail

Trad. American, c.1909



Down Where the Drunkards Roll

See the boys out walking, the boys they look so fine
Dressed up in green velvet, their silver buckles shine
Soon they'll be bleary-eyed under a keg of wine

Down where the drunkards roll

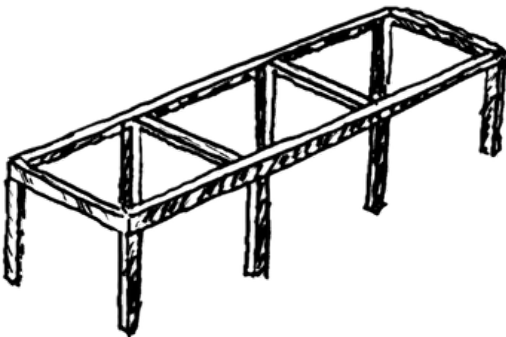
Down where the drunkards roll

See that lover standing staring at the ground
He's looking for the real thing, lies were all he found
But you can get the real thing, it will only cost a pound

There goes a troubled woman, she dreams a troubled dream
She lives out on the highway, she keeps her money clean
Soon she'll be returning to the place where she's the queen

You can be a gambler who never drew a hand
You can be a sailor, never left dry land
You can be Lord Jesus, all the world will understand

Richard Thompson, UK, 1974



Drill Ye Tarriers Drill

Am

Every morning at seven o'clock

E⁷

There are twenty tarriers drilling at the rock

Am

And the boss come along and he said keep still

E⁷

And come down heavy on the cast-iron drill

Am

E⁷

Am

And drill ye tarriers drill

Am

E⁷

Am

And drill ye tarriers drill

C

For it's work all day for the sugar in yer tay

E⁷

Down behind the old railway

Am

E⁷

Am

And drill ye tarriers drill

E⁷

Am

E⁷

Am

And blast - and fire!

Our new foreman is Jimmy McCann

By God he is a blame mean man

One day a premature blast went off

And a mile in the air went big Jim Gough

When next pay day came around

Jim Gough a dollar short was found

When he asked "What for?" came this reply

"You were docked for the time you were up in the sky"

Our boss is a good man down to the ground

And he married a lady six feet round

She bakes good bread and she bakes it well

But she bakes it hard as the holes in hell

Thomas Casey, 1888

In 1888, an unskilled labourer would earn \$1.59 for a 10-hour work day, implying that Jim Gough stayed aloft for about six hours. Alternatively, this is wage theft.



Drunken Sailor



What shall we do with the drunken sailor
What shall we do with the drunken sailor
What shall we do with the drunken sailor
Early in the morning

*Hooray and up she rises
Hooray and up she rises
Hooray and up she rises
Early in the morning*

Throw him in the longboat 'til he's sober...

Shave his belly with a rusty razor...

Put him in the scuppers with a hose pipe on him...

Put him in the guardroom till he's sober...

That's what we'll do with the drunken sailor...

Trad. British sea shanty, c.1830s

Earth My Body

Earth my body, water my blood
Air my breath and fire my spirit

Origin unknown, believed to be 1980s

Drunken Sailor can be sung as a "quodlibet" with Sinner Man (page 168)- repeat the final chorus to make both songs the same length. Other songs that go with these two are Roll The Old Chariots and Óró, sé do bheatha 'bhaile (not in this book)



The Eddystone Light

My father was the keeper of the Eddystone light
And he slept with a mermaid one fine night
And of that union there came three
A porgy and a porpoise and the other was me

*Yo ho ho, the wind blows free
Oh for a life on the rolling sea*

Late one night when I was a trimmin' of the glim
And singing a verse of the evening hymn
A voice from the starboard shouted "Ahoy"
And there was my mother, sitting on a buoy

"Oh what has become of my children three?"
My mother then she asked of me
"Oh, one was exhibited as a talking fish
The other was served on a chafing dish"

The phosphorus flashed in her seaweed hair
I looked again and my mother wasn't there
A voice came echoing out of the night
"To Hell with the keeper of the Eddystone Light!"

Trad. English, c.1860



Erie Canal

Am Dm E7
I got an old mule and her name is Sal
Am E7 Am
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal
Am Dm E7
She's a good worker and a good old pal
Am E7 Am
Fifteen years on the Erie Canal
C G
We've hauled some barges in our day
Am E7
Full of lumber and coal and hay
Am C Dm E7
And we know every inch of the way
Am E7 Am G
From Albany to Buffalo-o

C G
Low bridge, everybody down
C G C
Low bridge for we're coming to a town
C F
And you'll always know your neighbour
C F
You'll always know your pal
C F C G C
If you've ever navigated on the Erie Canal

We'd better get along on our way old gal
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal
'Cause you bet your life I'd never part with Sal
Fifteen years on the Erie Canal
Get up there, mule, here comes a lock
We'll make Rome 'bout six o'clock
One more trip and back we go
Right back home to Buffalo

Thomas Allen, 1912

It has been claimed that Allen based this song on a pre-existing folk song sung by the workers on the Erie Canal, but the evidence is sketchy.



Fathom the Bowl

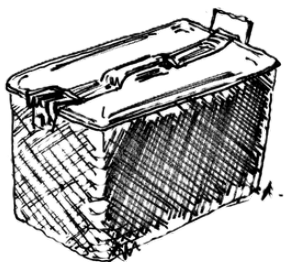
Come all you bold heroes lend an ear to my song
I will sing you the praise of good brandy and rum
If the clear crystal fountains o'er England shall roll

*Bring me the punch ladle, I'll fathom the bowl
I'll fathom the bowl
I'll fathom the bowl
Bring me the punch ladle, I'll fathom the bowl*

From France we do get brandy, from Jamaica comes rum
Sweet oranges and lemons from Portugal come
But stout and strong cider are England's control

My wife she do delight me as I sits at my ease
For she says as she likes and she does as she please
My wife she is a darling, she's a wild and free soul

My father he do lie in the depths of the sea
With no stone at his head but what matters for he?
If the clear crystal fountains o'er England shall roll



Original Trad. English, c.1891

The drink punch was brought to Britain by sailors returning home from British colonies in India. Punch became a favourite of the British aristocracy, who used expensive spices and alcohol to show off their wealth, and was often served in ostentatiously decorated silver bowls. Punch is thought by some to be the original cocktail. Rum was a byproduct of the vast sugar estates that were built in the British Caribbean, which until the 1830s employed enslaved people.



Few Days

Well I pitched my tent on this campground
Few days, few days
And I give old Satan another round
And I am going home

I can't stay in these diggings
Few days, few days
Lord I can't stay in these diggings
And I am going home

Although I like the diggings here...
I won't stay here another year...

For years I've laboured in cold ground...
And now, at last, I'm homeward bound...

I'm going home to stay a while...
Before I go I'll plant a smile...

These banking thieves I will not trust...
But with me take my little dust...

My mother she has gone before...
I'll meet her there at glory's door...

So I pitched my tent on this campground...
And I give old Satan another round...



Trad. American, c. 1854



Fiddler's Green

As I roved by the docks one evening so rare
To view the still water and take the salt air
I heard an old fisherman singing a song
Oh take me away boys, me time it's not long

*Dress me up in me oilskins and jumper
No more on the docks I'll be seen
Just tell me old shipmates I'm taking a trip mates
And I'll see you someday in Fiddlers Green*

Now Fiddlers Green is a place I've heard tell
Where fishermen go if they don't go to Hell
Where the weather is fair and the dolphins do play
And the cold coast of Greenland is far, far away

Now the sky's always clear and there's never a gale
And the fish jump on board with a swish of their tail
Where you lie at your leisure, there's no work to do
And the skipper's below making tea for the crew

Now when we're in dock and the long trip is through
There's pubs and there's parks and there's lasses there too
Where the girls are all pretty and the beer it flows free
And there's bottles of rum growing from every tree

No I don't need a harp nor a halo, not me
Just give me a breeze and a good rolling sea
And I'll play me old squeezebox as we sail along
With the wind in the rigging to sing me this song

John Connelly, 1966



Fields of Athenry

By a lonely prison wall
I heard a young girl calling
“Michael, they have taken you away
For you stole Trevelyan's corn
So our young might see the morn
Now a prison ship lies waiting in the bay”

*Low lie the fields of Athenry
Where once we watched the small free birds fly
Our love was on the wing we had dreams and songs to sing
It's so lonely 'round the fields of Athenry*

By a lonely prison wall
I heard a young man calling
“Nothing matters, Mary, when you're free
Against the famine and the crown
I rebelled, they cut me down
Now you must raise our child with dignity”

By a lonely harbour wall
She watched the last star falling
As that prison ship sailed out against the sky
For she lived to hope and pray
For her love in Botany Bay
It's so lonely 'round the fields of Athenry

Pete St. John, 1979

This popular Irish song tells of the punishment inflicted on those who resisted the British government during the Great Famine in 1845-52. Over the preceding centuries, Irish Catholics had been forcibly displaced from good farmland by English and Scottish settlers. One of the few crops that could be grown on the scraps of land left to the Irish was potatoes. When blight disease destroyed the potato crops in 1845, people starved, but Ireland's wealthy protestant landowners continued to export large amounts of food. Charles Trevelyan was a civil servant partially responsible for Britain's failure to provide any effective famine relief.



Fish and Chips and Vinegar

Fish and chips and vinegar, vinegar, vinegar

Fish and chips and vinegar, salt and pepper on the lot

One bottle of beer, two bottle of beer,

three bottle of beer, four bottle of beer,

Five bottle of beer, six bottle of beer, seven bottle of beer, eight

Oh you can't put your muck in our dustbin, our dustbin, our dustbin

Oh you can't put your muck in our dustbin, our dustbin's full

Origin Unknown



Five Hundred Miles

If you miss the train I'm on
You will know that I am gone
You can hear the whistle blow a hundred miles
A hundred miles, a hundred miles
A hundred miles, a hundred miles
You can hear the whistle blow a hundred miles

Lord I'm one, Lord I'm two
Lord I'm three, Lord I'm four
Lord I'm five hundred miles from my home
Five hundred miles, five hundred miles
Five hundred miles, five hundred miles
Lord I'm five hundred miles from my home

Not a shirt on my back
Not a penny to my name
Lord I can't go home this a-way
This a-way...
Lord I can't go home this a-way

Hedy West, 1961



Follow the Drinking Gourd

When the sun comes back and the first quail calls
Follow the drinking gourd
The old man is a-waiting for to carry you to freedom
Follow the drinking gourd, gourd, gourd, gourd

*Follow the drinking gourd, follow the drinking gourd
For the old man is a-waiting for to carry you to freedom
Follow the drinking gourd*

Now the river bank makes a mighty good road
The dead trees will show you the way
Left foot, peg foot, travelling on
Follow the drinking gourd, gourd, gourd, gourd

The river ends between two hills
Follow the drinking gourd
There's another river on the other side
Follow the drinking gourd, gourd, gourd, gourd

Where the little river meets the great big one
Follow the drinking gourd
There the old man is a-waiting for to carry you to freedom
Follow the drinking gourd, gourd, gourd, gourd

Trad. American spiritual, 1800s

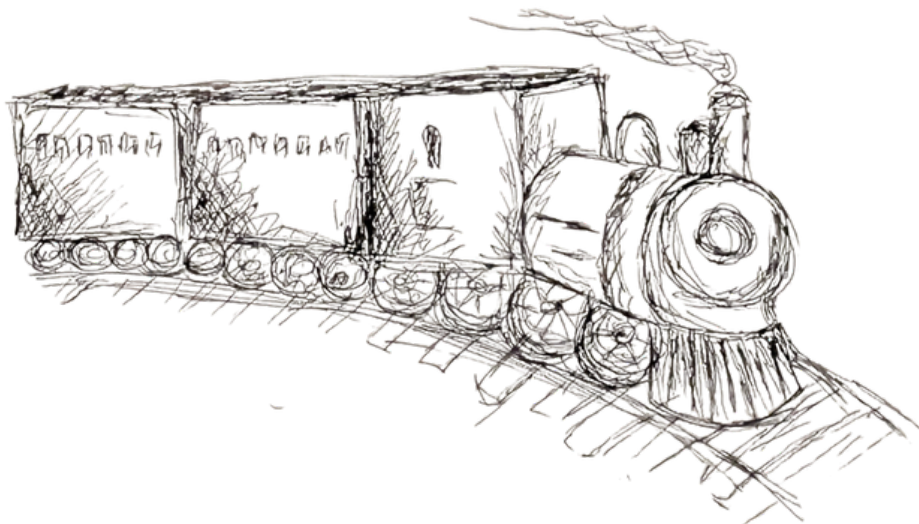
The drinking gourd is another name for the Plough constellation which points to the North Star and is an accurate marker to follow while travelling at night. The song tells the story of a sailor known as Peg-Leg Joe who helped enslaved people to escape and run north to freedom, following the waters of the Tombigbee and Ohio Rivers. He would teach this song to those escaping and show them the mark of his peg-leg, which they could then follow.



Freedom Train

This old free-dom train has been a long— time co-ming aint no
 bo-dy go-nna miss it now so jump on while it's ru-nning gi-mme that
 Fr - ee - dom gi-mme that Fr - ee - dom gi-mme that
 Free-dom free-dom Chk-a-cha chk-a-cha Free-dom free-dom Chk a cha chk-a cha
 8 part alternative: Free - dom free - dom chk-a-cha chk-a-cha

Trad. American



Of unknown origin but presumably refers to the “Freedom Train” which toured the United States in 1947-1949 promoting “Americanism” in the aftermath of the Second World War. Significantly the train was officially desegregated by the Truman administration at a time when some southern states segregated train passengers by race.



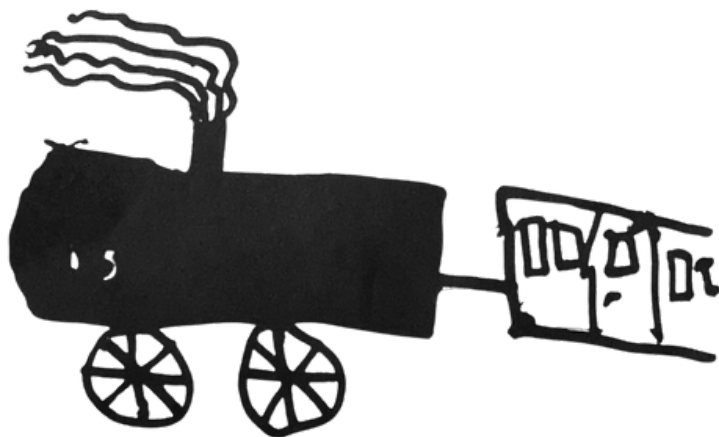
Freight Train

*Freight train, freight train runs so fast
Freight train, freight train runs so fast
Please don't tell what train I'm on
So they won't know where I'm gone*

When I die, Lord, bury me deep
Way down on old Chestnut Street
So I can hear old number nine
As she comes rolling by

When I am dead and in my grave
No more good times ere I crave
Put a stone at my head and feet
And tell them all that I'm gone to sleep

Elizabeth Cotten, 1910



Elizabeth 'Libba' Cotten wrote this classic song in approximately 1910 aged 14. As a black woman working in domestic service she had little time for music. Decades later she became a maid to the musical Seeger family, picked up her guitar again after 40 years, and started releasing compositions and songs from her youth. The copyright to Freight Train was stolen from her by two male British folksingers, and eventually returned.



Froggy Went A-Courtin'

Froggy went a courtin' and he did ride, a-hum
Froggy went a courtin' and he did ride, a-hum, a-hum
Froggy went a courtin' and he did ride
A sword and pistol by his side
A-hum, a-hum, a-hum, a-hum

Came up to Missie Mouse's door, a-hum...
Where he'd often been before...

Missie Mouse are you within? A-hum...
Yes kind sir and please do come in...

Missie Mouse will you marry me? A-hum...
O no kind sir that never can be...

Without my Uncle Rat's consent, A-hum...
I would not marry the President...

Uncle Rat laughed till he split his sides, a-hum...
To think his niece would be a bride...

Where will the wedding breakfast be? A-hum...
Way down yonder in the hollow tree...

What will the wedding breakfast be? A-hum
Two red beans and a black-eyed pea...

So they all went swimming across the lake, a-hum...
And got swallowed up by a big black snake...

Trad. British, c.1549

While this version of the song is based on 20th century recordings made by singers in the USA, the first version appears in the Scots language in 1549 under the name 'The Frog cam to the Myl Dur'. It may be an allegory for the marriage of the young Mary Queen of Scots (Missie Mouse) to the French Prince Louis (Froggy).



Frogs Go Tralalalala



Mm-mm went the little green frog one day
Mm-mm went the little green frog
Mm-mm went the little green frog one day
And they all went mm-mm ah

But we know frogs go tralalalala, tralalalala, tralalalala
We know frogs go, tralalalala
They don't go mm-mm ah

Origin Unknown

Ghost of John

Have you heard of the ghost of John?
Pale white bone with the flesh all gone
Poo-oo-oo-oor old John
Wouldn't it be chilly with no skin on?

Origin Unknown



Go Down You Blood Red Roses

Our boots and clothes is all in pawn
Go down, you blood red roses, go down
And it's flaming draughty 'round Cape Horn
Go down, you blood red roses, go down

Oh, you pinks and posies
Go down, you blood red roses, go down

It's 'round Cape Horn we must go...
Our clothes all stiff with ice and snow...

My dear old mother wrote to me...
Saying dearest son, come home from the sea...

It's growl you may but go you must...
If you growl too hard, your head they'll bust...

Just one more heave and that'll do...
And we're the ones to see her through...

Trad. English halyard shanty, c.1850



Great American Railway

In eighteen hundred and eighty one
The American Railway was begun
The American Railway was begun
The Great American Railway

Patsy - atsy - or - ee - ay, patsy - atsy - or - ee - ay
Patsy - atsy - or - ee - ay, the Great American Railway

I found myself with nothing to do...
Just beside the Railway

The overseer accepted me...
For work upon the Railway

My hands were tired and my feet were sore...
From working on the Railway

I found myself more dead than alive...
From working on the Railway

I trod on a bundle of dynamite sticks...
Just beside the Railway

I found myself half way to heaven...
Just above the Railway

I picked the lock of the Golden Gate...
With a crowbar from the Railway

I found my wings and a harp divine...
Overlooking the Railway

If you want any more you can sing it again...
All about the Railway

Trad. American, c.1900

The first rails of the US Transcontinental Railway were laid in January of 1863, but presumably it took them until 1881 to realise you can't start a song that way.



Green Grow the Rushes-O

I'll sing you one-o!
Green grow the rushes-o
What is your one-o?
One is one and all alone
And ever more shall be so

Two, two, the lily white boys clothèd all in green-o
Three, three the rivals
Four for the Gospel makers
Five for the symbols at your door
Six for the six proud walkers
Seven for the seven stars in the sky
Eight for the April rainers
Nine for the nine bright shiners
Ten for the Ten Commandments
Eleven for the eleven that went to Heaven
Twelve for the Twelve Apostles

Trad. English, 1800s



This song refers to an obscure mix of Christian theology, astrological formations, and other things that can only be guessed at.



Greenland Whale Fisheries

They took us jolly sailor lads
A-fishing for a whale
On the fourth day of August in 1864
Bound for Greenland we set sail

The lookout stood on the crosstrees high
The spyglass in his hand
“There’s a whale, there’s a whale, there’s a whale-fish” he cried
And she blows at every span

The captain stood on the quarter deck
And a sod of a man was he
Overhaul, overhaul, let our davit tackles fall
And we’ll launch them boats to sea

We strapped that whale and the line played out
But she gave a flurry with her tail
And the boat capsized, we lost seven of our men
And we never caught that whale

Well the losing of seven fine seamen
Well it grieved our captain sore
But the losing of a bloody sperm whale
Oh it grieved him ten times more

Oh, Greenland is a horrid place
Where our fisher lads have to go
Where the rose and the lily never bloom in spring
And there’s only ice and snow

Whaling was a hard and bitter job, working in cruel weather amid a deluge of blood. It wasn’t very nice for the whales either. This song was first published in 1725, but there have been many versions sung before and since.



Grey Funnel Line

Don't mind the rain or the rolling sea
The weary night never worries me
But the hardest time in a sailor's day
Is to watch the sun as it dies away
Here's one more day on the Grey Funnel Line

The finest ship that sails the sea
Is still a prison for the likes of me
But give me wings like Noah's dove
I'd fly up harbour to the girl I love
Here's one more day on the Grey Funnel Line

Oh Lord, if only dreams were real
I'd have my hands on that wooden wheel
And with all my heart I'd turn her round
And tell the boys that we're homeward bound
Here's one more day on the Grey Funnel Line

I'll pass the time like some machine
Until blue water turns to green
Then I'll dance on down that walk ashore
And sail the Grey Funnel Line no more
And sail the Grey Funnel Line no more

Cyril Tawney, 1959

"The Grey Funnel Line" was a nickname among sailors for the Royal Navy, whose ships had their masts painted a dull grey.



Grey Goose

*John dead, grey goose, gone home
And the fox in the way of the morning*

Who'll dig his grave?
Grey goose, gone home
And the fox in the way of the morning

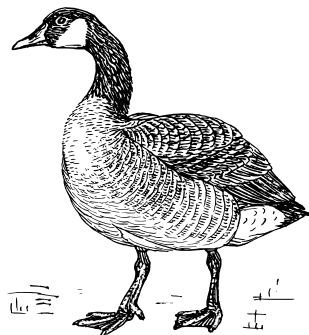
John dead....

Who'll lower him down...

Who'll sew his shroud...

Who'll toll the bell...

Who'll cover him o'er...



Trad. Caribbean Shanty, c1800s

Collected in St Vincent in the Windward Islands and presumably comprised of a snippet of a much older ballad. Over the course of the 18th and 19th century, many English ballads made their way across the Atlantic to British colonies in the Caribbean, where the songs were transformed into shorter rhythmic forms, combined with musical styles originating in West Africa. Some have suggested that the call-and-response form that we associate with Sea Shanties has its origin in West African music.



Hal and Tow

Take the scorn to wear a horn
It was the crest when you were born
Your father's father wore it
And your father wore it too

*Hal and Tow, jolly rumbelow
We were up long before the day-oh
To welcome in the summer, to welcome in the May-oh
For summer is a-coming in and winter's gone away-oh*

What happened to the Spaniards
That made so great a boast-oh
Why they shall eat the feathered goose
And we shall eat the roast-oh

Robin Hood and Little John
Have all come to the Fair-oh
And we will to the merry green wood
To hunt the buck and hare-oh

God bless St Mary, Moses
And all the poor and mite-oh
And send us peace to England
Send peace by day and night-oh

Trad. English, 1600s

A song with a much-disputed history, and many iterations over the years. The chorus was first recorded in the 1600s, and verses in the late 1800s. It is an old Cornish song which accompanied a dance intended to bring good fortune, good weather for crops and fertility for the livestock.



Hallelujah I'm a Bum

Oh the winter is gone and the springtime has come
So I'll pick up my bundle and go on the bum

Hallelujah, I'm a bum, Hallelujah, bum again
Hallelujah, give us a handout to revive us again

Oh I went to a house and I asked for some bread
And the lady said "Bum, Bum, the baker is dead"

Oh why don't you work as other men do?
How the Hell can I work when there's no work to do?

Oh why don't you pray for your daily bread?
Well, if that's all I did I would damn soon be dead

Oh I went to a house and I knocked on the door
And the lady said Bum, Bum, you've been here before



Trad. American, c.1890



Hanging on the Old Barbed Wire

If you want to see the general, I know where he is
I know where he is, I know where he is
If you want to see the general, I know where he is
He's pinning another medal on his chest
I saw him, I saw him
Pinning another medal on his chest (I saw him)
Pinning another medal on his chest

If you want to see the colonel, I know where he is...
He's sitting in comfort stuffing his bloody face...

If you want to see the major...
He's home again on seven days' leave...

If you want to see the sergeant...
He's drinking all the company's rum...

If you want to see the corporal...
He's drunk upon the dug-out floor...

If you want to see the private...
He's hanging on the old barbed wire...

Trad. British, c.1914

Appeared during World War 1, written by soldiers in the trenches. On the Western Front, trenches were first dug as ditches to protect soldiers and evolved into a complex network of nearly 500 miles across Europe. Conditions were terrible: rats, rot, rising waters and mud. Thousands of young men on both sides died going 'over the top' to face enemy fire in an attempt to win enemy trenches; casualties were horrific.



Hard Times

Let us pause in life's pleasures and count its many tears
While we all sup sorrow with the poor
There's a song that will linger forever in our ears
Oh hard times come again no more

*'Tis the song, the sigh of the weary
Hard times, hard times come again no more
Many days you have lingered around my cabin door
Oh hard times come again no more*

While we seek mirth and beauty and music light and gay
There are frail forms fainting at the door
Though their voices are silent their pleading looks still say
Oh hard times come again no more

There's a pale drooping maiden who toils her life away
With a worn heart whose better days are o'er
Though her voice would be merry she's sighing all the day
Oh hard times come again no more

'Tis a sigh that is wafted across the troubled wave
'Tis a wail that is heard upon the shore
'Tis a dirge that is murmured around the lowly grave
Oh hard times come again no more

Stephen Foster, USA, 1854

Frequently sung during the American Civil War in the early 1860s as an expression of suffering and hardship. Foster said he based the tune on snatches of spirituals he had heard when his nurse had taken him to the local African-American church.



Hares on the Mountain

If all you young men were hares on the mountain
If all you young men were hares on the mountain
How many young girls would take guns and go hunting?

If the young men could sing like blackbirds and thrushes...
How many young girls would go beating the bushes?

If all you young men were ducks in the water...
How many young girls would dive in and swim after?

If all you young men were rushes a-growing....
How many young girls would take scythes and go mowing?

But the young men are given to frisking and fooling
Oh, the young men are given to frisking and fooling
So I'll leave them alone and attend to my schooling

Trad. English, c. 1837



Harriet Tubman

One night I dreamed I was in slavery
'Bout 1850 was the time
Sorrow was the only sign
Nothing around to ease my mind
Out of the night appeared a lady
Leading a distant pilgrim band
“First mate”, she yelled pointing her hand
“Make room on board for this young woman”

*Singing come on up (mm-mm-mm), I got a lifeline
Come on up to this train of mine
Come on up (mm-mm-mm), I got a lifeline
Come on up to this train of mine
She said her name was Harriet Tubman
And she drove for the Underground Railroad*

Hundreds of miles we travelled onward
Gathering slaves from town to town
Seeking every lost and found
Setting those free that once were bound
Somehow my heart was growing weaker
I fell by the wayside's sinking sand
Firmly did this lady stand
She lifted me up and took my hand

Walter Robinson, 1977

Harriet Tubman was a leader of the Underground Railroad, a secret network of safe houses that helped slaves escape to the north during the American Civil War. For most enslaved people, the only hope of freedom was escape.



Haul Away Joe

When I was a little lad or so my mother told me
Way haul away, we'll haul away Joe
That if I didn't kiss the girls my lips would grow all mouldy
Way haul away, we'll haul away Joe

Way haul away, we'll haul away together
Way haul away, we'll haul away Joe
Way haul away, we'll haul for better weather
Way haul away, we'll haul away Joe



King Louis was the king of France, before the revolution...
And then he had his head cut off which spoiled his constitution

The cook is in the galley making duff so handy...
The captain's in his cabin drinking wine and brandy...

You call yourself a second mate but you cannot tie a bowline...
You cannot even stand up straight when the ship's a-rolling...

Saint Patrick was a gentleman, he came from decent people...
He built a church in Dublin Town, and on it put a steeple....

Saint Patrick drove the snakes away and drank up all the whiskey...
This made him sing and dance a jig, he felt so fine and frisky...

Charley Dalton had a pig and it was double-jointed...
He took it to the blacksmith's shop to get its trotters pointed...

Trad. sea shanty, 1800s

This is a 'short-haul' shanty, meaning it has a quick pace suitable for quick work. It was traditionally sung by sailors while they hauled the foresheet, the rope attached to the frontmost sail of a boat.



The Herring (Geordie Version)

What'll I do with my herring's head?
Oh what'll you do with your herring's head?
I make it into loaves of bread
Herring's head - loaves of bread

*And all manner of things
Of all the fish that swim in the sea
The herring is the fish for me
Away the day, away the day, my Hinnie oh*

What'll I do with my herring's eyes?
Oh what'll you do with your herring's eyes?
I make them into puddings and pies
Herring's eyes - puddings and pies
Herring's head - loaves of bread

Herring's tail - barrel of ale
Herring's guts - pair of boots
Herring's scales - ship with sails
Herring's fins - needles and pins
Herring's back - fishing smack
Herring's gills - window sills



Oh what do you think of such a thing?
Haven't I done well with my bonny herring?

Trad. English, c.1831

A drinking song particularly popular in the Northeast of England. Nicknamed "silver darlings" in parts of England, herring have played an important role in the economy of Northern Europe, acting both as a staple food and an important trade good.



Hesitation Blues

If the river was whiskey and I was a duck
I'd dive to the bottom and I'd never come up

*Tell me how long have I got to wait?
Can I get you now, or must I... Hesitate?*

If the river was whiskey and the branch was vine
You'd see me in bed most all of the time

I was born in Alabama, raised in Tennessee
If you don't like my peaches, keep your hands off my tree

Two old maids sitting in the sand
Each one a-wishing that the other was a man

I was born in England, schooled in France
If you want to know more better ask my parents

I got the hesitation stockings, hesitation shoes
I really do believe I got the hesistation blues

Trad. American, c.1916



Hey Ho, Anybody home?



Hey, ho, anybody home?
Meat nor drink nor money have I none
Still I will be merry, very merry

Thomas Ravenscroft, c.1609

This 16th century song was a favourite of carollers who went from door to door at Christmas hoping for food and drink. It can be sung either in three or six parts as a round, and works as a 'simultaneous quodlibet' (sung at the same time) with Rose, Rose on page 155 and "Ah Poor Bird" (not in this book)

Hill an' Gully Rider

*Hill an' gully rider, hill an' gully
Hill an' gully rider, hill an' gully*

With a low down bend down

Hill an' gully

With a low down bend down

Hill an' gully

And then you better mind your tumble down

Hill an' gully...

If you tumble down you break your neck

Hill an' gully...

If you break your neck you go to Hell

Hill an' gully...

Trad. Jamaican Work Song, 1800s

This Jamaican song can be sung either as a round or as a call and response. The original version was sung in Jamaican Creole, a language created by enslaved people brought to Jamaica to work on British plantations. Millions of people from Africa were enslaved and taken to European colonies in the Americas; many died on the journey across the Atlantic, or were worked to death upon arrival.



The Hippopotamus

A bold hippopotamus was standing one day
On the banks of the cool Shalimar
He gazed at the bottom as it peacefully lay
By the light of the evening star
Away on a hilltop sat combing her hair
His fair hippopotami maid
The hippopotamus was no ignoramus
And sang her this sweet serenade

*Mud, mud, glorious mud
Nothing quite like it for cooling the blood
So follow me follow, down to the hollow
And there let us wallow in glorious mud*

The fair hippopotama he aimed to entice
From her seat on the hilltop above
As she hadn't got a ma to give her advice
Came tiptoeing down to her love
Like thunder the forest re-echoed the sound
Of the song that they sang as they met
His inamorata adjusted her garter
And lifted her voice in duet

Now more hippopotami began to convene
On the banks of that river so wide
I wonder what am I to say of the scene
That ensued by the Shalimar side
They dived all at once with an ear-splitting splosh
Then rose to the surface again
A regular army of hippopotami
All singing this haunting refrain

Michael Flanders and Donald Swann, 1960



Home Boys Home

Oh who wouldn't be a sailor boy a-sailing on the main?
To gain the good will of his captain is to blame
For he went ashore now one evening for to be
And that was the beginning of the whole calamity

*And it's home, boys, home, home I'd like to be
Home for a while in me own country
Where the oak and the ash and the bonny rowan tree
Are all a-blooming freely in the north country*

Now I asked her for a handkerchief to tie around me head
And likewise for a candle for to light me up to bed
She tended to me needs just as I like a maid to do
So then I says to her, "why don't you jump in with me too?"

Oh she jumped into bed now taking no alarm
Thinking a young sailor lad to her could do no harm
I hugged her, I kissed her the whole night long
Till she wished the short night had been seven years long

Oh well early next morning the sailor lad arose
And into Mary's apron poured a pocket full of gold
Saying "Take this my dear for the mischief I have done
For tonight I fear I've left you with a daughter or a son."

Well if it be a girl child, we'll send her out to nurse
With silver in her pocket and gold in her purse
And if it be a boy child we'll give him the jacket blue
And send him up the rigging like his daddy used to do

Alternate Verse:

Well if the child likes history, then send them out to teach
And if they like religion, then send them out to preach
And if they like the open sea, then give 'em the jacket blue
And send 'em up the rigging like their daddy used to do

Come listen all you fair maids take this advice from me
Never let a sailor lad an inch above your knee
For I trusted one and he beguiled me
And he left me with a pair of twins to dandle on me knee

The Dubliners, c.1960

Seemingly based on two earlier songs, "Rosemary Lane" and "The Oak and the Ash". The alternate verse included here was penned by two woodlings on camp in 2024.



The Huntsman

The Huntsman blew loud on his horn, blew loud on his horn
And all that he blew it was lost and gone, was lost and gone
(Ta-ri-a sar sah, ti-ra-la-la)
And all that he blew it was lost and gone

Shall all my blowings be just forlorn...
Far better were I no huntsman born...

He cast his net the bush about...
A nut brown damsel sprung quickly out...

Oh nut brown damsel escape me not...
I have great big hounds that will fetch thee hot...

Thy great big hounds they will fetch me not...
My high mighty leapings they know them not...

Thy high mighty leapings they know full well...
They know that today death thee must fell...

Well if I die then I'll be dead...
O bury me deep 'neath the roses red...

And under the lilies and roses red...
I'll sleep for ever, in my last bed...

And on her grave three lilies grew...
A squire rode by and would pluck the few...

O Squire forbear, let the lilies stand...
They are for a fresh young huntsman's hand...

Origin Unknown, thought to be FSC

This song is thought to be unique to the FSC oral folk tradition. The verses appear to be a combination of two German poems written in 1776, both of which refer to an even older ballad called the "Nachtjaeger" ("Night Hunter"). It's the first song in the first FSC songbook of 1968 and was popularized on camp by Ron "Beefy" Brand, staff at the original Forest School.



I Am Weary (Let Me Rest)

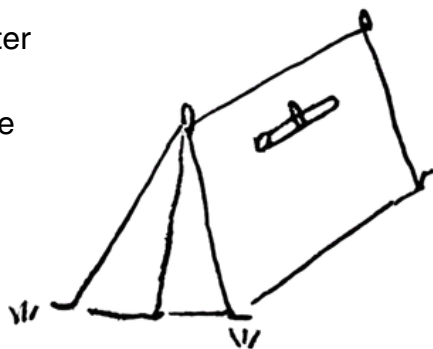
Kiss me, Mother, kiss your daughter
Lay my head upon your breast
Throw your loving arms around me
I am weary, let me rest

Seems the light is swiftly fading
Pride or sins they do now show
I am standing by the river
Angels wait to take me home

Kiss me, Mother, kiss your daughter
See the pain upon my brow
While you'll soon be with the angels
Fate has doomed my future now

Through the years you've always loved me
And my life you've tried to save
But now I shall slumber sweetly
In a deep and lonely grave

Kiss me, Mother, kiss your darling
Lay my head upon your breast
Throw your loving arms around me
I am weary, let me rest
I am weary, let me rest



Pete Roberts, USA, c.1960



I Don't Want Your Millions Mister

I don't want your millions, Mister
I don't want your diamond ring
All I want is the right to live, Mister
Give me back my job again

I don't want your Rolls Royce, Mister
I don't want your pleasure yacht
All I want is food for my babies
Give to me my old job back

We worked to build this country, Mister
While you enjoyed a life of ease
You've stolen all that we built, Mister
Now our children starve and freeze

Think me dumb if you wish, Mister
Call me green or blue or red
This one thing I know for sure, Mister
My hungry children must be fed

Take the two opposing parties
No difference in them I can see
But with a Farmer Labor party
We could set the people free

Jim Garland, USA, 1941



I Feel A Sin Coming On

I feel a sin comin' on
I feel a right that's about to go wrong
I got a shiver down to the bone
I feel a sin comin' on

*And you can see it, all over my face
Sweet temptation, all over the place
Give me tall, dark and handsome
Mix it up with something strong
I feel a sin (I feel a sin) comin' on*

I got a buzz in my brain
Drunk on a love goin' down like champagne
I got a feelin' it's gonna leave a lipstick stain
And I'll be the only one to blame

Please, Jesus, don't hold me back
I know it ain't mine, but I want it so bad
The smoke and the whiskey's
Got me feeling easy
And the lights are all fadin' to black

Angaleena Presley, Ashley Monroe & Miranda Lambert, 2012



I Like the Flowers

I like the flowers,
I like the daffodils
I like the mountains,
I like the rolling hills
And I like the fireside
When the lights are low
(Singing a-boom-di-ay, a-boom-di-ay
a-boom-di-ay, a-boom-di-ay)



I Like the Potholes

I like the potholes,
I like the drippy rocks,
I like the stalactites
And I don't mind the soggy socks
And I like to crawl around
Way down underground
(Singing and echoing and echoing
and echoing and echoing)



Bess Spencer-Vellacott, Rowan Kinchin, Molly Hopkinshaw & friends, 2003.



I'll Fly Away

Some bright morning when this life is over
I'll fly away
To that home on God's celestial shore
I'll fly away

*I'll fly away, O Glory
I'll fly away (In the morning)
When I die, Halleluia, by and by
I'll fly away*

When the shadows of this life are gone...
Like a bird from these prison walls I'll fly...

Oh, how glad and happy when we meet...
No more cold iron shackles on my feet...

Just a few more weary days and then...
To a land where joys will never end...

Albert E. Brumley, USA, 1929



"I'll Fly Away" has been called the most recorded gospel song of all time. It's common at worship and funerals in many Christian denominations.



Ilkley Moor baht 'at

Where has tha been since I saw thee, I saw thee?

On Ilkley Moor baht 'at!

Where has tha been since I saw thee?

Where has tha been since I saw thee?

On Ilkley Moor baht 'at! (Where's that?)

On Ilkley Moor baht 'at! (Up North!)

On Ilkley Moor baht 'at! (Where the ducks play football)

Tha's been a-courting Mary Jane...

Tha's bound to catch thy death of cold...

Then we shall have to bury thee...

Then t'worms'll come and eat thee up...

Then t'ducks'll come and eat up t'worms...

Then we shall come and eat up t'ducks...

Then we shall all have eaten thee...

The moral of the story goes...

Don't go without a hat!

Don't go without a hat!

Don't go without a hat!

Trad. English, c.1850

Traditionally sung in a Yorkshire accent, with the title meaning "On Ilkley Moor without a hat". It is considered by some to be an unofficial anthem of the county of Yorkshire. Our version is written in Yorkshire dialect with standard spellings. The t' represents a glottal stop, which is used to replace the word "the" in Yorkshire dialects.



Irene

*Irene, good night Irene
Irene, good night
Good night Irene, good night Irene
I kiss you in my dreams*

I asked your mother for you
She told me you was too young
I wish to the Lord I'd never seen your face
I'm sorry you ever was born

Last Saturday night I got married
Me an' my wife settled down
Now me an' my wife are parted
Gonna take me a stroll uptown

You caused me to weep, you caused me to mourn
You caused me to leave my home
But the very last words I heard her say
Were, "Please sing me one more song"

Stop rambling and stop gambling
Quit staying out late at night
Go home to your wife and your family
Sit down by the fireside bright

I love Irene, God knows I do
I love her 'til the sea runs dry
If Irene turns her back on me
I'm gonna take morphine and die

Sometimes I live in the country
Sometimes I live in the town
Sometimes I have a great notion
To jump in the river and drown

Huddie 'Lead Belly' Ledbetter, USA, c.1880

Written by Huddie Ledbetter, one of the most influential African-American folk artists of the 1930s, based upon the earlier song "Irene, Goodnight" by Gussie Lord Davis, the first African-American songwriter to become famous on Tin Pan Alley, a NYC street that housed many musical publishing houses.



Jamaica Farewell



Down the way where the nights are gay
And the sun shines daily on the mountain top
I took a trip on a sailing ship
And when I reached Jamaica, I made a stop

*But I'm sad to say, I'm on my way
Won't be back for many a day
My heart is down, my head is turning around
I had to leave the one I love in Kingston Town*

Sounds of laughter everywhere
And the dancing girls swing to and fro
I must declare that my heart is there
Though I've been from Maine down into Mexico

Down at the market you can hear
Ladies cry out as on their heads they bear
Ackee, rice and saltfish are nice
And the rum is fine any time of year

Irving Burgie, c.1950

This song is written in the form of a traditional Jamaican folk song, known as a “mento”. Irving Burgie wrote “Jamaica Farewell” for Harry Belafonte’s 1956 album ‘Calypso’. Ackee and saltfish is the national dish of Jamaica.

Jean Harlow

Jean Harlow died the other day
And these are the very last words I heard her say
Mama don't walk, mama talking... New York
Zing-a-lang-a Zing-a-lang-a doo-doo-doo-doo... New York

Huddie “Lead Belly” Ledbetter, c.1937



Jock Stewart

My name is Jock Stewart, I'm a canny young man
And a rambling young fellow I've been
So be easy and free when you're drinking with me
I'm a man you don't meet every day

*Come fill up your glasses of brandy or wine
And whatever the cost I will pay
So be easy and free when you're drinking with me
I'm a man you don't meet every day*

I've got acres of land, I have men at command
And I've always a shilling to spare
So be easy and free when you're drinking with me
I'm a man you don't meet every day

I take out my dog and with him I do shoot
All by the River Kildare
So be easy and free when you're drinking with me
I'm a man you don't meet every day

Trad. Scottish, c.1880



John Ball

Who'll be the lady, who will be the lord
When we are ruled by the love of one another
Who'll be the lady, who will be the lord
In the life that is coming in the morning

*Sing John Ball and tell it to them all
(Or: Sing John Ball, and Johanna Ferrour)
Long live the day that is dawning
And I'll crow like a cock, I'll carol like a lark
For the life that is coming in the morning*

Eve is the lady, Adam is the lord
When we are ruled by the love of one another
Eve is the lady, Adam is the lord
In the life that is coming in the morning

All shall be ruled by fellowship I say
All shall be ruled by the love of one another
All shall be ruled by fellowship I say
In the life that is coming in the morning

Labour and spin for fellowship I say
Labour and spin for the love of one another
Labour and spin for fellowship I say
And the life that is coming in the morning

Sydney Carter, UK, 1981

John Ball was one of the leaders of the 1381 Peasants Revolt. His studies of the Bible led him to conclude that there was no basis for the feudal system of aristocracy and peasants - as all were equal in the garden of Eden. Johanna Ferrour was one of the two female co-leaders: one of many women who participated in the revolt but were written out of its history.



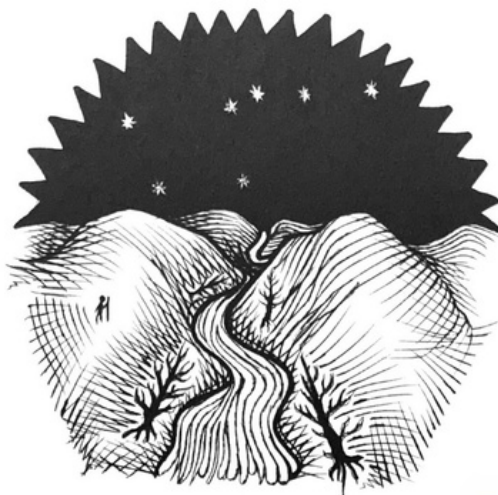
Johnny Boy Go Home

Johnny Boy go home, to the land you know
There's a warm fire burning, a place set at your table
Johnny Boy go home, far away from this place
Please remember the morning mist, feel the sun on your face

See the light shining, shining on the water's edge
Warm away the winter chill with the joy that you bring into my heart
See the light shining, shining on the water's edge
Warm away the winter chill with the joy that you bring into my heart

Johnny Boy go home, to the land you know
There's a future calling you, there's a future calling me
Johnny Boy go home, far away from this place
Please remember the morning mist, feel the sun on your face

Matthew Wood & Karen Simpson, UK, 2000



Written for a play called *Castles And Roses* by Karen Simpson (Action Transport Theatre Company) about a boy who finds himself with a canalboat family in the early 1900's. Now probably uniquely preserved on FSC.



Johnny I Hardly Knew Ye

While goin' the road to sweet Athy, hurroo, hurroo
While goin' the road to sweet Athy, hurroo, hurroo
While goin' the road to sweet Athy
A stick in me hand and a tear in me eye
A doleful damsel I heard cry
Johnny I hardly knew ye

With your drums and guns and drums and guns...
The enemy nearly slew ye
Oh my darling dear, ye look so queer
Johnny I hardly knew ye

Where are your eyes that looked so mild...
When my heart you so beguiled
Why did ye skeddadle from me and the child
Johnny, I hardly knew ye

Where are your legs that used to run...
When you went for to carry a gun
Indeed your dancing days are done
Johnny, I hardly knew ye

Ye haven't an arm, ye haven't a leg...
Ye're an armless, boneless, chickenless egg
Ye'll have to put with a bowl out to beg
Johnny I hardly knew ye



I'm happy for to see ye home...
All from the island of Sulloon
So low in flesh, so high in bone
Johnny I hardly knew ye

But sad it is to see you so...
And to think of you now as an object of woe
Your Peggy will still keep you on as her beau
Johnny I hardly knew ye

They're rolling out the guns again...
To fight the wars in France and Spain
But they never will take our sons again
Johnny I'm swearing to ye

Joseph Geoghegan, England, 1867

A parody of a 1863 patriotic song called "When Johnny comes marching home again" about the joyous reception of a returning war hero by the grateful residents of his home town. This version uses the same tune and structure to paint a different picture.



Jug of Punch

As I was sitting with jug and spoon
One fine morning in the month of June
A birdie sat on an ivy bunch
And the song he sang was the jug of punch

*Toora loora loo, Toora loora loo
Toora loora loo, Toora loora loo
A birdie sat on an ivy bunch
And the song he sang was a jug of punch*

What more diversion can a man desire
Than to court a maid by an ale house fire?
With Kerry Pippin to crack and crunch
Aye, and on the table a jug of punch

The learned doctors with all their art
Cannot cure depression that's on the heart
Even the glutton forgets their lunch
When they stick their nose in a jug of punch

And when I'm dead and in my grave
No costly tombstone will I crave
Just lay me down in my native peat
With a jug of punch at my head and feet



Trad. Irish, 1800s

A traditional Irish drinking song. Punch is often considered to come from the Hindi word "Panch" meaning 5, as it has five ingredients: alcohol, water, sugar, spices, and citrus.



The Keeper

The Keeper did a-shooting go
And under his cloak he carries a bow
All for to shoot at a merry little doe
Among the leaves so green-o

Jackie Boy

Sing ye well

Hey down

Derry, derry down.

To my hey down down

Hey down

Derry, derry down.

Master

Very Well

Ho down

Among the leaves so green-o

To my ho down down

Ho down

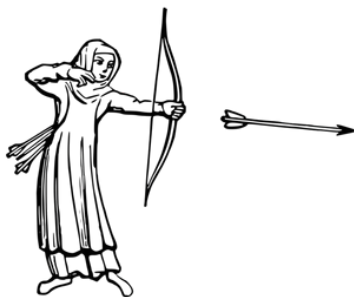
Among the leaves so green-o

The first doe he shot at he missed
The second doe he trimmed, he kissed
The third doe went where nobody wist
Among the leaves so green-o

The fourth doe she did cross the brook
The keeper fetched her back with his crook
Where she is now she may remain
Among the leaves so green-o

The fifth doe she did cross the brook
The keeper fetched her back with his crook
Where she is now you may go and look
Among the leaves so green-o

The sixth doe she ran over the plain
But he with his hounds did turn her again
It is there he did hunt in a merry, merry vein
Among the leaves so green-o



Trad. English, c.1670

Originally called "The Huntsman's Delight", earlier versions contained lyrics which made the song's allegory of pursuing women more obvious.



Kilgary Mountain

As I was a going over Kilgary Mountain
I met Captain Farrell and his money he was counting
I drew forth my pistol and I rattled out my sabre
Saying, "Stand and deliver for I am a bold deceiver"

Mush-a-rigum-a-durum-dar
Whack fol di daddy-o
Whack fol di daddy-o
There's whisky in the jar

I counted out his money and it made a pretty penny
So I put it in my pocket and I took it home to Jenny
She promised in her heart that she never would deceive me
But the Devil take the woman for she never could be easy

I went to Jenny's chamber for to take a little slumber
I dreamt of gold and jewels and for sure it was no wonder
But Jenny drew my charges and filled them up with water
Then she fetched Captain Farrell just as fast as she could totter

'Twas early in the morning I was wakened from my napping
I beheld a band of footman and the wily, handsome captain
I reached for my pistols for to begin the slaughter
But I could not discharge them for I couldn't fire the water

I reached for my sabre but I found I hadn't any
And I knew I had been taken by my darling sporting Jenny
And thus I did surrender, and a prisoner I was taken
And by a gay deceiver then I was all forsaken



If anyone can help me its my brother in the army
But I know not where he's stationed, be it Cork or in Killarney
If only I could find him we'd go roving in Kilkenny
And I know he'd treat me better than my darling sporting Jenny

Now some folks takes delight in their carriages a-rolling
And others takes delight in the hurley and the bowling
But me I takes delight in the juice of the barley
And courting pretty women in the morning bright and early

Trad. Irish, 1800s

An Irish song also known as "Whiskey In The Jar" - often sung in pubs and drinking holes as a toast to highwaymen, army defectors and "robbers of the rich to feed the poor". Some versions let our hero go free.

Kookaburra

Kookaburra sits on the old gum tree
Merry merry king of the bush is he
Laugh, Kookaburra, laugh
Kookaburra, gay your life must be

Marion Sinclair, Australia, 1932



The Larks They Sang Melodious

It was pleasant and delightful one midsummer's morn
And the fields and the meadows were all covered in corn
And the thrushes and songbirds sang on every green spray
And the larks they sang melodious at the dawning of the day
And the larks they sang melodious
And the larks they sang melodious
And the larks they sang melodious
At the dawning of the day

A sailor and his true love were walking one day
Says the sailor to his true love, "I am bound far away
I am bound for the East Indies where the loud cannons roar
I am bound to leave you, Nancy, you're the girl that I adore"
"I am bound to leave you, Nancy..."

Then the ring from off her finger she instantly drew
Saying, "Take this dearest William and my heart it goes too"
And as they were embracing tears from her eyes fell
Saying "May I go along with you?" "Oh no, my love, farewell"
Saying "May I go along with you..."

Now the wind's in the rigging and the anchor's aweigh
And the ship she will be sailing at the dawning of the day
And the current is rising on a fast-flowing tide
"And if ever I return again, I will make you my bride"
"And if ever I return again..."

Original Trad. English, 1800s



Lay Me Low

*Lay me low, lay me low, lay me low
Where no one can see me
Where no one can find me
Where no one can hurt me*

Show me the way
Help me to say
All that I needed to
All that I wanted you gave me
All that I needed you made me
When I stumbled you saved me

Throw me a line
Help me to find
Something to cling to
When loneliness haunts me
When bitterness taunts me
When the emptiness heeds me

Trad. Shaker Hymn, c.1850

The Shakers were an egalitarian Christian sect who lived in small communities in the United States, an offshoot of the larger Quaker movement. Due to their egalitarian beliefs, Shakers practiced total equality of the sexes beginning in the late 18th century. Only one Shaker community exists today, which has three members.



Leave Her Johnny

I thought I heard the old man say
Leave her, Johnny, leave her
It's a long hard pull to the next pay day
And it's time for us to leave her

Leave her, Johnny, leave her
Oh, leave her, Johnny, leave her
It's a long hard pull to the next pay day
And it's time for us to leave her

The captain was bad but the mate was worse...
He could blow you down with a sigh and a curse...

And a dollar a day is a Jack Shite's pay...
When it's pump all night and work all day...

Now the rats are all gone and we the crew...
Oh it's time by Christ that we went too...

Well it's pump or drown, the old man said...
Or else by Christ we'll all be dead...

I thought I heard the old man say...
Just one more pump and then belay...

Trad. sea shanty, 1800s

This shanty was sometimes sung by sailors to mark the end of a voyage, often as they pumped the ship dry for the final time once it was tied up in port.



Leaving of Liverpool

^A Farewell to you ^D my own true ^A love

^E I'm going far away

^A I am bound for ^D California ^A

^E But I know that I'll return some ^A day

^E *So fare thee well my own true love*

And when I return united we will be ^E

It's not the ^A *leaving of Liverpool that* ^D *grieves me* ^A

But my darling when I think of thee ^E ^A

I have shipped on a Yankee sailing ship

Davy Crockett is her name

And Burgess is the Captain of her

And they say she's a floating shame

I have shipped with Burgess once before

And I think I know him well

If a man is a sailor he can get along

If he's not then he's sure in Hell

Oh the sun is on the harbour, love

And I wish I could remain

For I know it will be some long time

Before I see you again

Trad. fo'c'sle song, c.1880



A Lesson Too Late for the Learning

It's a lesson too late for the learning
Made of sand, made of sand
In the wink of an eye my heart is turning
In your hand, in your hand

*Are you going away with no word of farewell?
Will there be not a trace left behind?
I could have loved you better, didn't mean to be unkind
You know that was the last thing on my mind*

As we walk all my thoughts are a-tumbling
Round and round, round and round
Underneath our feet the subway's rumbling
Underground, underground

As I lie in my bed in the morning
Without you, without you
Every song in my heart dies a-borning
Without you, without you

You have reasons a-plenty for going
This I know, this I know
For the weeds have been steadily growing
Please don't go, please don't go

Tom Paxton, 1964



Let No Man Steal your Thyme

Come all you fair and tender maids
Who flourish in your prime, prime
Beware, beware, if you're good and fair
Let no man steal your thyme, thyme
Let no man steal your thyme

For when your thyme it is passed and gone
He'll care no more for you, you
And every place where your thyme was waste
Shall spread all o'er with rue, rue
Shall spread all o'er with rue

For woman is a branchy tree
And man a clinging vine, vine
And from your branches, carelessly
He'll take what he can find, find
He'll take what he can find

Trad. English, c.1700s

This is the first song that was 'collected' by British folklorist Cecil Sharp, which he learnt from the appropriately named John England. The metaphorical use of thyme to describe a woman's virginity appears across a number of songs.



Lie Lie Lie Lie

Lie l' lie lie Lie l' lie lie Lie l' lie lie l' lie lie

Lie lie lie lie lie lie lie lie l' lie lie

Lie lie lie l' lie lie lie l' lie lie l' lie lie

Trad. Jewish Lament

An arrangement of a traditional Jewish folk tune by Su Hart as part of a Holocaust Memorial project. During the Holocaust, or Shoah, millions of Jewish, Romani, Polish, and Russian people were systematically murdered by the German state. People with disabilities, queer people, and political dissidents were also targeted.

Liverpool Street Station

There's a girl that I love who has gi-ven me the

She says poor men are fools ov-er rich men she

I can-not sleep life goes on and on, I've start-ed tak-ing

Where does she go? Where does she live? Her place of work to me she did-n't

shove, she says I am too low for her sta-tion

drools so it's rob a bank or take up the pools

Mog-a-don and love's a sick-ness doc-tors can't treat

ev-er give and now I'm writ-ing lett-ers that I know I ne-ver can de-li-ver!



There's a girl that I - love who has given me the - shove
She says I am too - low for her - - - station

She says poor men are - fools, over rich men she - drools
So it's rob a bank or - take up the - pools - - -

I can't sleep, life goes on and on, I've started taking Mogadon
But love's a sickness doctors can't - - treat - -
Where does she go, where does she live?
Her place of work to me she didn't ever give

And now I'm writing letters that I know I never can deliver - - - -

Richard Crossland

Lowlands

I dreamed a dream the other night
Lowlands, lowlands away, my John
I dreamed a dream the other night
Lowlands away

I dreamed my love came standing by...
Came standing close by my bedside...

He's drowning in the lowlands sea...
And never more coming home to me...

He's drowning in the lowlands low...
And never more shall I him know...

He's lying in the windy lowlands...
He's lying in the windy lowlands...

Trad. fo'c'sle song c.1870

Thought to be a fragment of a much older, and longer, ballad that has since been lost. The tune was preserved among sailors as a shanty, and was particularly popular among African-American sailors working out of the port of Mobile, Alabama.



Maids When You're Young

An old man came courting me, hey ding dorum da
An old man came courting me, me being young
An old man came courting me, fain would he marry me
Maids when you're young never wed an old man

*'Cause he's lost his fallorum fal diddle di-orum
He's lost his fallorum fal diddle di-ay
He's lost his fallorum he's got no ding dorum
Oh maids when you're young never wed an old man*

When we went to church...
... he left me in the lurch...

When we went to bed...
... he lay like he was dead...

I threw me leg over him...
... damn near did smother him...

When he went to sleep...
... out of bed I did leap ...
Into the arms of a handsome young man

Trad. English, 1700s

Prior to the introduction of the welfare state during the early 1900s, marriage for working-class women was often a case of financial necessity first, romantic inclination second. Older men with accrued wealth were a pragmatic financial option for young women.



Mairi's Wedding

*Step we gaily, on we go, heel for heel, and toe for toe
Arm in arm and on we go, all for Mairi's wedding*

Over hill-ways up and down
Myrtle green and bracken brown
Past the sheiling through the town
All for sake of Mairi

Plenty herring, plenty meal
Plenty peat to fill her creel
Plenty bonny bairns as weel
That's the toast for Mairi

Cheeks as bright as rowans are
Brighter far than any star
Fairest of them all by far
Is my darling Mairi

Hugh Robertson, 1936



Originally written in Gaelic as a tribute to renowned Gaelic singer Mary C. MacNiven. These English lyrics were written by Sir Hugh Robertson with the consent of the original author two years later.



The Manchester Rambler

I've been over Snowdon, I've slept up on Crowdon
I've camped by the Wain Stones as well
I've sunbathed on Kinder, been burned to a cinder
And many more things I can tell
My rucksack has oft been my pillow
The heather has oft been my bed
And sooner than part from the mountains
I think I would rather be dead

*I'm a rambler, I'm a rambler from Manchester way
I get all me pleasure the hard moorland way
I may be a wage slave on Monday
But I have my freedom on Sunday*

The day was just ending as I was descending
By Grimesbrook just by Upper Tor
When a voice cried, "Hey you!" in the way keepers do
He'd the worst face that ever I saw
The things that he said were unpleasant
In the teeth of his fury I said
"Sooner than part from the mountains
I think I would rather be dead"

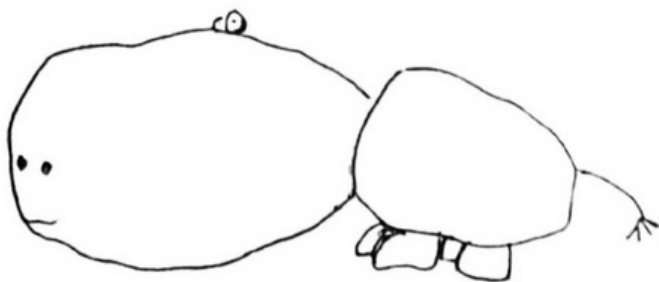
He called me a louse and said, "Think of the grouse"
And I thought but I still couldn't see
How old Kinder Scout and the moors round about
Couldn't hold both the poor grouse and me
He said, "All this land is my master's"
At that I stood shaking my head
No man has the right to own mountains
Any more than the deep ocean bed



I once loved a maid, a spot-welder by trade
She was fair as the rowan in bloom
And the blue of her eye matched the June moorland sky
And I wooed her from April till June
On the day that we should have been married
We went for a ramble instead
For sooner than part from the mountains
I think I would rather be dead

So I'll walk where I will, over mountain and hill
And I'll lie where the bracken is deep
I belong to the mountains, the clear-running fountains
Where the grey rocks rise rugged and steep
I've seen the white hare in the gully
And the curlew fly high overhead
And sooner than part from the mountains
I think I would rather be dead

Ewan MacColl, 1932



Inspired by author Ewan MacColl's participation in the Kinder mass trespass. This was a deliberate act of civil disobedience intended to secure free access to England's mountains and moorlands. The protest was to have a powerful long-term effect, leading to improved access to the countryside in the shape of national parks, long-distance footpaths starting with the Pennine Way, and various forms of the desired 'right to roam'.



Martin Said to His Man

Martin said to his man, "Fie, man, fie"

Martin said to his man, "Who's the fool now?"

Martin said to his man, "Fill thou the cup and I the can"

"Thou hast well drunken man, who's the fool now?"

I saw the man in the moon, fie, man fie

I saw the man in the moon, who's the fool now?

I saw the man in the moon, sliding down St Peter's shoen

Thou hast well drunken man, who's the fool now?

I saw the mouse chase the cat...

...and saw the cheese eat the rat...

I saw the maid milk the bull...

...every stroke a bucketful...

I saw the hare chase the hounds...

...forty miles above the ground...

I saw the flea heave a tree...

...forty leagues across the sea...

I saw the sheep shearing corn

...and saw the cuckold blow his horn...

Trad. English, c.1560

One of the oldest songs we sing; Martin and his man are arguing as to which of them is more drunk. As they do, the song makes fun of the tellers of tall stories. Shoen is an old word for shoe, and sliding means to patch up an old shoe. The man in the moon is thought to refer to King Henry VIII, whose face was round and pale, and 'St Peter' is speculated to be a reference to the Pope.



Mary Don't You Weep

^CIf I could, I ^Gsurely would
Stand on the rock where ^CMoses stood
^FPharaoh's army got ^Cdrowned
^GOh Mary don't you ^Cweep
^COh ^FMary ^Cdon't you weep, ^Gdon't you moan
^COh Mary don't you weep, don't you moan
^FPharaoh's army got ^Cdrowned
^GOh Mary don't you ^Cweep

Mary wore three links of chain
And on each link was Jesus' name

Mary wore three links of chain
And every one was Freedom's name

One of these nights, about twelve o'clock
This old world's going to reel and rock

Moses stood on the Red Sea shore
Shooting the water with a two-by-four

God gave Noah the rainbow sign
No more water but fire next time

The Lord told Moses what to do
To lead those Hebrew children through

Trad. American spiritual, Early 1800s

A song born in the anonymity of plantation slavery in the Southern United States, it references Bible stories which offered the hope of freedom and the punishment of oppressors. The Mary whose tears are referred to is Mary of Bethany (sister of Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead: another miracle of hope).



May the Circle Be Unbroken

I was standing at my window
On a cold and cloudy day
When I saw a hearse come rolling
Oh to carry my sweetheart away

*May the circle be unbroken
By and by, Lord, by and by
There's a better home a-wai-ting
In the sky, Lord, in the sky*

Oh I told the undertaker
"Undertaker, please drive slow
'Cause this lady that you're holding
Oh I hate to see her go"

I will follow close behind her
Try to hold up and be brave
But I could not hold my sorrow
As they laid her in her grave

Ada Habershon & Charles Gabriel, 1907



Ada Ruth Habershon was a prolific Christian writer from Marylebone, London. She travelled to the USA on a teaching tour and she wrote the lyrics for more than one thousand hymns.



Mercedes-Benz

Oh Lord, won't you buy me a Mercedes-Benz?
My friends all drive Porsches, I must make amends
Worked hard all my lifetime, no help from my friends
Oh Lord, won't you buy me a Mercedes-Benz?

Oh Lord, won't you buy me a colour TV?
Dialing for Dollars is trying to find me
I'll wait for delivery each day until three
Oh Lord, won't you buy me a colour TV?

Oh Lord, won't you buy me a night on the town?
I'm countin' on you, Lord, please don't let me down
Prove that you love me and buy the next round
Oh Lord, won't you buy me a night on the town?

Oh Lord, won't you buy me a Mercedes-Benz?
My friends all drive Porsches, I must make amends
Worked hard all my lifetime, no help from my friends
Oh Lord, won't you buy me a Mercedes-Benz?

Janis Joplin, 1970

Janis Joplin was an iconic singer, songwriter and rock star who was once arrested for using "vulgar and indecent language" after yelling "Don't f*** with those people!" towards police officers doing crowd control during her performance.



Midnight Special

Well you wake up in the morning to the ding-dong ring
Go marching to the table, see the same damn thing
Knife and fork upon the table, nothing in my pan
Say anything about it you're in trouble with the man

*Let the Midnight Special
Shine its light on me
Let the Midnight Special
Shine its ever-loving light on me*

Well yonder come Miss Rosy, how in the world d'you know?
Well I knowed her by her apron and the dress she wore
Umbrella on her shoulder, piece of paper in her hand
She's gonna tell the gov'nor turn a-loose my man

Now jumping little Judy was a jumping queen
And she's been jumping since she was sixteen
Well she bring me little coffee, she bring me little tea
She bring me damn near everything but the jailhouse key

If you ever go to Houston then you'd better walk right
And you'd better not stagger and you'd better not fight
For the sheriff will arrest you and carry you down
You can bet your bottom dollar, you're penitentiary bound

Trad. American, c.1900

The Midnight Special was the train which pulled out of the Southern Pacific depot at Houston, Texas at midnight sharp, headed for San Antonio, El Paso and San Francisco. Thirty miles along, it shone its "ever-loving light" through the barred windows of Texas State Prison Farm at Sugarland.



Mingulay Boat Song

What care we though white the Minch is
What care we for wind or weather
Let her go, boys! Every inch is
Weaving home, home to Mingulay

*Heel yer ho, boys, let her go, boys
Bring her head round, now all together
Heel yer ho, boys, let her go, boys
Sailing home, home to Mingulay*

Wives are waiting on the bank, or
Looking seaward from the heather
Pull her round, boys! And we'll anchor
Ere the sun set at Mingulay

Ships are sailing, heavy-laden
Mothers holding bairns a-crying
They'll return yet, when the sun sets
They'll return back to Mingulay

Hugh S. Robertson, UK, c.1930



Mole in a Hole

I like the flowers and I like the trees
I like the woodlands and the bees
I like the Byrds on their LPs
And I'm a refugee

*I wanna be a mole in a hole, digging low and slow
I wanna be a fly flying high in the sky
I wanna be a mole in a hole, digging low and slow
I wanna be a fly flying high in the sky*

I had a friend as wise as Mr Wise Owl
He could count from one to ten, from A to Z
My friend he was so wise he got religion
That's why I'm alive today and he is dead

I had a friend who had a friend in Jesus
He used to read the good book every day
My friend he got so friendly with friend Jesus
Friend Jesus took my only friend away

My feet are smelly and my hair's a mess
My teeth are yellow and I've got bad breath
I may look great but I feel like death
And I'm a refugee

Mike Waterson, 1975



My Baby Cares for Only Me



My baby cares for, my baby cares for
My baby cares for, my baby cares for only me

My pretty baby I sigh for, my pretty baby I'd die for
Cos my baby don't love nobody but me, and I'm so happy

Baby just, baby just, baby just cares for
Baby just, baby just, baby just cares for
Baby just, baby just, baby just cares for
Baby cares for only me

Everybody loves my baby, everybody loves my baby

Origin Unknown

My Girl's a Corker

My girl's a corker, she's a New Yorker
I'd give her anything to keep her in style
She's got a pair of feet, just like two plates of meat
Yes sir, that how the money goes, Ta, ra, ra
Umpah, umpah, umpah-pah
Stick it up your jumpah-pah

She's got a pair of legs, just like two whisky kegs
She's got a pair of hips, just like two battleships
She's got a pair of arms, just like two waving palms
She's got a pair of eyes, just like two custard pies
She's got a shapely nose, just like a garden hose
She's got a mop of hair, just like a grizzly bear
She wears silk underwear, I wear my latest pair

John Stromberg, USA, c.1880



My Goose



1 2

Why does-n't my goose Sing as well as thy goose?

3 4

When I paid for my goose Twice as much as thine?

Origin Unknown

My Grandfather's Clock

My Grandfather's clock was too large for the shelf
So it stood ninety years on the floor
It was taller by half than the old man himself
Though it weighed not a pennyweight more
It was bought on the morn of the day that he was born
And was always his pleasure and pride
But it stopped, short, never to go again when the old man died

*Ninety years without slumbering, tick tock, tick tock
His life's seconds numbering, tick tock, tick tock
It stopped, short, never to go again when the old man died*

In watching its pendulum swing to and fro
Many hours had he spent as a boy
And in childhood and manhood the clock seemed to know
And to share in his grief and his joy
For it struck twenty four as he entered in the door
With his blushing and beautiful bride
But it stopped, short, never to go again when the old man died



My Grandfather said that of those he could hire
Not a servant more true could be found
For it wasted no time and had but one desire
At the end of each week to be wound
And it kept in its place, not a frown upon its face
And its hands never hung by its side
But it stopped, short, never to go again when the old man died

It struck an alarm in the dead of the night
An alarm that for years had been dumb
And we knew that his spirit was poised for its flight
That the hour of departure had come
Still the clock kept strict time with a soft and muffled chime
As we silently stood by his side
But it stopped, short, never to go again when the old man died

Henry Clay Work, c.1870



Written by Henry Clay Work, the great abolitionist, unionist and prohibitionist from Connecticut. A mechanical genius and musical score typesetter, he was said to compose melodies straight onto the printing press.



My Husband's Got No Courage In Him

As I went out one May morning
To view the fields and leaves a-springing
I saw two maidens standing by
And one of them her hands was wringing
And all of their conversation went
My husband's got no courage in him

*Oh dear-o, oh dear-o
Me husband's got no courage in him!
Oh dear-o*

Me husband's admired wherever he goes
And everyone looks well upon him
With his handsome features and well-shaped leg
But still he's got no courage in him

Me husband can dance and caper and sing
And do anything that's fitting for him
But he cannot do the thing I want
Because he's got no courage in him

All sorts of victuals I did provide
All sorts of meats that's fitting for him
With oyster pie and rhubarb too
But still he's got no courage in him

Every night when I goes to bed
I lie and throw me leg right o'er him
And my hand I clamp between his thighs
But I can't put any courage in him



Seven long years I've made his bed
And every night I've lain beside him
But this morning I rose with me maidenhead
For still he's got no courage in him

I wish me husband he was dead
And in his grave I'd quickly lay him
And then I'd find another one
That's got a little courage in him

Trad. English, 1800s



Oysters are traditionally considered to be an aphrodisiac food. Rhubarb on the other hand was commonly used as a laxative in pre-modern Europe. Hopefully they were not being consumed at the same time. This song was often excluded from collections of folksong because its presentation of female sexual agency was considered inappropriate.

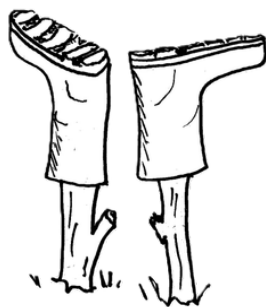


My Johnny Was a Shoemaker

My Johnny was a shoemaker
And dearly he loved me
My Johnny was a shoemaker
But now he's gone to sea
With pitch and tar to soil his hands
And to sail across the sea, stormy sea
And sail across the stormy sea

His jacket was a deep sky blue
And curly was his hair
His jacket was a deep sky blue
It was I do declare
For to reef the topsails up against the mast
And to sail across the sea, stormy sea
And sail across the stormy sea

Some day he'll be a captain bold
With a brave and gallant crew
Some day he'll be a captain bold
With a sword and spyglass too
And when he has his gallant captain's sword
He'll come home and marry me, marry me
He'll come home and marry me



Trad. British, 1800s



The Nightingale

As I was walking one morning in May
I heard a young couple so fondly did stray
And one was a fair maid as fair as can be
And the other was a soldier of the brave Grenadiers

*And they kissed so sweet and comforting
As they clung to each other
They went arm in arm along the road like sister and brother
They went arm in arm along the road till they came to a spring
And they both sat down together love
To hear the nightingale sing*

Then out from his knapsack he drew a fine fiddle
And he played her such merry tunes as you ever did hear
And he played her such merry tunes as the valley did ring
“Oh la”, cried the fair maid, “How the nightingales sing”

“I’m off to India for seven long years
Drinking wines and strong whiskies instead of strong beers
And if ever I return again it’ll be in the spring
And we’ll both sit down together love to hear the nightingale sing”

Oh, then says the fair maid, “Won’t you marry me?”
“Oh no”, says the soldier, “However could that be?
For I’ve my son and wife at home in my own country
And she is the fairest little maid that you ever did see”

Trad. English, c.1690

Originally published with the catchy title: “The nightingale’s song, or, The soldier’s rare musick, and maid’s recreation”



No Man's Land

Well how do you do, Private William McBride
Do you mind if I sit here down by your graveside
And rest for a while in the warm summer sun?
I've been walking all day and I'm damn nearly done
And I see by your gravestone you were only nineteen
When you joined the glorious fallen in nineteen-sixteen
Well I hope you died quick and I hope you died clean
Or Willie McBride, was it slow and obscene?

*Did they beat the drum slowly, did they play the fife lowly?
Did the rifles fire o'er you as they lowered you down?
Did the bugles sound the Last Post in chorus?
Did the pipes play the Flowers o' the Forest?*

And did you leave a wife or a sweetheart behind
In some loyal heart is your memory enshrined?
And though you died back there in nineteen-sixteen
To that faithful heart are you forever nineteen?
Or are you a stranger without even a name
Forever enclosed behind some glass pane
In an old photograph torn and tattered and stained
And fading to yellow in a brown leather frame?

But the sun shining now on these green fields of France
The warm wind blows gently and the red poppies dance
The trenches have all vanished under the plough
No gas, no barbed wire, no guns firing now
But here in this graveyard it's still no man's land
The countless white crosses in mute witness stand
To man's blind indifference to his fellow man
And a whole generation who were butchered and damned



And I can't help but wonder now, Willie McBride
Do all those who lie here know why they died?
Did you really believe them when they told you the cause?
Did you really believe that this war would end wars?
The suffering, the sorrow, the glory, the shame
The killing, the dying, it was all done in vain
For Willie McBride it all happened again
And again and again and again and again

Eric Bogle, UK, 1976

Oak and Ash and Thorn

Of all the trees that grow so fair, old England to adorn,
Greater are none beneath the Sun, than Oak and Ash and Thorn.

*Sing Oak and Ash and Thorn, good Sirs
All of a Midsummer's morn!
Surely we sing of no little thing
In Oak and Ash and Thorn!*

Oak of the Clay lived many a day, or ever Aeneas began
Ash of the Loam was a lady at home, when Brut was an outlaw man
Thorn of the Down saw New Troy Town, from which was London born
Witness hereby the ancients, of Oak and Ash and Thorn!

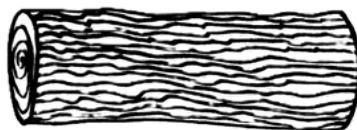
Yew that is old in churchyard mould, he breedeth a mighty bow
Alder for shoes do wise men choose, and beech for cups also
But when ye have killed, and your bowl is spilled,
Your shoes are clean outworn
Back ye must speed for all that ye need, to Oak and Ash and Thorn!



Elm she hates mankind, and waits, till every gust be laid
 To drop a limb on the head of him, that anyway trusts her shade
 But whether a lad be sober or sad, or mellow with ale from the horn
 He'll take no wrong when he lieth along, 'Neath Oak and Ash and Thorn!

Oh, do not tell the Priest our plight, or he would call it a sin;
 But—we've been out in the woods all night, a-conjuring Summer in!
 And we bring you news by word of mouth
 Good news for cattle and corn —
 Now is the Sun come up from the South, with Oak and Ash and Thorn!

Rudyard Kipling (1906), Peter Bellamy (1970)



Old Ab'ram Brown

Old A - brah'm brown is dead and gone you'll
 ne - ver see him more He
 used to wear a long brown coat that
 butt - oned down be - fore Old

Trad. English



The Old Dun Cow

Some pals and I in a public house
Were playing dominoes last night
When all of a sudden in the potman rushed
With a face just like a kite
What's up? says Brown, have you seen a ghost?
Have you seen your Aunt Maria?
Me Aunt Maria be blowed, says he
The bloomin' pub's on fire

What's that? says Brown, what a bit of luck
What a bit of luck, shouts he
Down in the cellar with a fire on top
We'll all have a good ol' spree
So we all went down with good ol' Brown
And beer we couldn't miss
And we hadn't been ten minutes there
Before we were like this

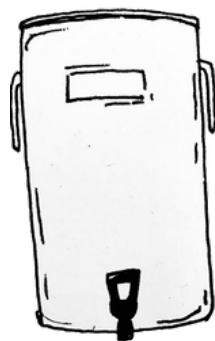
*Oh, there was Brown, upside down
Knocking back the whiskey on the floor
Booze! Booze! the firemen cried
As they came a-knocking at the door
Don't let 'em in till it's all mopped up
Someone shouted, MacIntyre!
And we all got blue-blind paralytic drunk
When the Old Dun Cow caught fire*



Old Johnson rushed to the port wine tub
And gave it just a few hard knocks
He started taking off his pantaloons
Likewise his shoes and socks
Hold on! says Snoops, if you wanna wash yer feet
There's a tub of four ale here
Don't dip your trotters in the port wine tub
When we've still got some old stale beer

Just then there came such an awful crash
Half the bloomin' roof gave way
We was run with the firemen's hose
But still we were all gay
We got some sacks and some old tin tacks
And bunged ourselves inside
And we got drinking good old scotch
'Til we was bleary eyed

*Oh, there was Brown, upside down
Knocking back the whiskey on the floor
Booze! Booze! the firemen cried
As they came a-knocking at the door
Don't let 'em in till it's all mopped up
Someone shouted, MacIntyre!
And we all got blue-blind paralytic drunk
When the Old Dun Cow caught fire*



Harry Wincott, 1893

This was a popular English music hall song. Before 1900, it was illegal to yell "Fire!" in a public building, so the word "MacIntyre" was used instead - the audience would all join in and shout it together.



Old Joe Clark

I used to live on the mountain top, now I live in the town
Staying at a boarding house and courting Betsy Brown

*Fare thee well Old Joe Clark, fare thee well I'm gone
Fare thee well Old Joe Clark and goodbye Betsy Brown*

Old Joe had a yellow cat, could neither sing nor pray
Stuck her head in a buttermilk jug and washed her sins away

When I was a little boy I used to want a knife
Now I am a bigger boy I only want a wife

When I was a little girl I used to play with toys
Now I am a bigger girl I only play with boys

I wish I was a sugar-tree, standing in the middle of town
And every time a pretty girl passed, I'd shake some sugar down

If I had a sweetheart, I'd sit her on the shelf
And every time she smiled at me, I'd get up there myself

Trad. American, c.1900



Old Mother Lee

There was an old woman called Old Mother Lee
Old Mother Lee, Old Mother Lee
There was an old woman called Old Mother Lee

*Down by the walnut tree
Down by the sea
Where the walnuts grow
I lost my love, I dare not go*

She held a baby in her arms...

She had a penknife long and sharp...

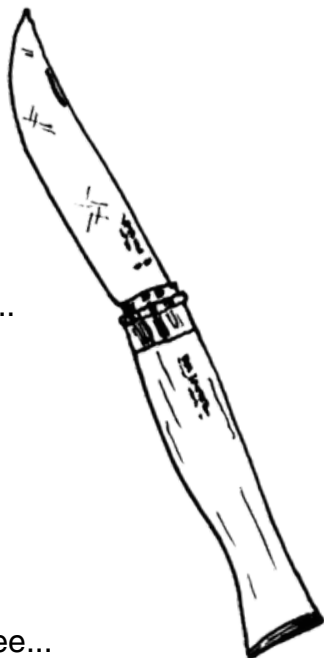
She stabbed the baby in the heart...

The county police came riding by...

The magistrate said she must die...

They hanged her from the walnut tree...

And that was the end of Old Mother Lee...



Trad. English, 1800s

This nursery rhyme once sung by schoolchildren in Liverpool is thought to be a light-hearted retelling of an old English ballad titled "The Cruel Mother". In the original, it is the ghost of the murdered child who kills the mother.



One More Pull

It's been a long time since you've seen her
Could have been three years or more
Will she be waiting when we dock, boy
Or like the others, will she be gone?

*And it's one more pull boys, that will do boys
Soon we'll draw alongside
Hoist her upwards, swing her inboard
For the journey's nearly done*

Well you're looking mighty fine, boy
All dressed in your number ones
You've scrounged a new blade from the purser
To scrape that bum-fluff from off your chin

And we'll make fast those bow and stern lines
As you scuttle down the gangway
If she's waiting there, just kiss her
Turn around, give us a smile.

For we too will go ashore soon
Get drunk in the clubs and bars
Stagger homeward, pockets empty
Like so many nights before.

For a man may have a wife, boy
And a man may take a mistress
But a sailor has his ship, boy
And his mistress it is the sea

Ian Woods, c.1980



Pace Egging Song

Here's one, two, three jolly lads all in one mind
We are come a pace egging and I hope you'll prove kind
And I hope you'll prove kind with your eggs and strong beer
For we'll come no more nigh you until the next year

And the first to come in is Lord Nelson you'll see
With a bunch of blue ribbons tied round by his knee
And a star on his breast that like silver doth shine
And I hope he remembers it's pace egging time

And the next to come in, it is Lord Collingwood
And he fought with Lord Nelson till he shed his blood
And he's come from the sea, Old England to view
And he's come a pace egging with all of his crew

And the last to come in is old Toss Pot you'll see
He's a valiant old man and in every degree
He's a valiant old man and he wears a pig tail
And his only delight is a-drinking mulled ale

Come ladies and gentlemen, sit by the fire
Put your hands in your pockets and give us our desire
Put your hands in your pockets and treat us all right
If you give nowt we'll take nowt, farewell and goodnight

Trad. English, 1800s

Pace-Egging was an Easter tradition in many parts of the country. It was similar to trick or treating, but instead of sweets people would ask for eggs, and instead of tricks they would perform plays.



The Parting Glass

Of all the money that e'er I had
I spent it in good company
And all the harm that e'er I've done
Alas it was to none but me
And all I've done for want of wit
To memory now I can't recall
So fill to me the parting glass
Good night and joy be with you all

If I had money enough to spend
And leisure time to sit a while
There is a young maid in the town
Who surely has my heart beguiled
Her rosy cheeks, her ruby lips
I swear she has my heart in thrall
So fill to me the parting glass
Good night and joy be with you all

Of all the comrades that e'er I had
They are sorry for my going away
And all the sweethearts that e'er I had
Would wish me one more day to stay
But since it falls unto my lot
That I should go and you should not
I'll gently rise and I'll softly call
Good night and joy be with you all



Trad. Scottish, c.1664

The "parting glass", or "stirrup cup", was the final hospitality offered to a departing guest: once they had mounted their horse, they were presented a final drink to fortify them for their travels. Prior to "Auld Lang Syne", this was the most popular parting song.



Poor Old Horse

A poor old man came a-riding by
And we say so! And we hope so
Says I, "Old man, your horse will die"
Oh, poor old horse!

And if he dies we'll tan his hide
But if he lives we'll ride him more

Get up, you swine, and look for graft
While we lays on, and yanks you aft

And after work and sore abuse
We'll salt you down for sailor's use

He's as dead as a nail in the lamproom door
And he won't come hazing us no more

We'll sink him down with a long, long roll
Where the sharks'll have his body, and the Devil his soul



Trad. British sea shanty, 1800s

This song originates in the custom of creating a dead horse from sail and dumping it overboard at the one month anniversary of a voyage and celebration of first pay-day. This custom had its origins in the hobby horse, an English village tradition involving men dressing as horses on May Day, dying and being revived - a remnant of ancient pagan fertility rites and the importance of the horse-cult.



Prickle-Eye Bush

*Oh, the prickle-eye bush
That breaks my heart so sore
If I ever get out of this prickle-eye bush
I'll never get in it any more*

Hangman, stay your hand, oh stay it for a while
For I think I see my father coming over yonder stile
Father, have you brought me gold, or silver to set me free
To save my body from the cold, cold ground
And my neck from the gallows tree?
No, I have not brought you gold, or silver to set you free
To save your body from the cold, cold ground
And your neck from the gallows tree

Hangman stay your hand, oh stay it for a while,
For I think I see my mother... brother... sister...

Hangman stay your hand, oh stay it for a while
For I think I see my true love coming over yonder stile
True love, have you brought me gold, or silver to set me free
To save my body from the cold, cold ground
And my neck from the gallows tree?
Yes, I have brought you gold, and silver to set you free
To save your body from the cold, cold ground
And your neck from the gallows tree

Trad. English, c.1770

One of the oldest and most interesting of ballads: mediaeval versions exist from the Baltics, Scandinavia, and Central Europe, and the narrative closely resembles the ancient Greek tale of Alcestris. In many versions the story tells of a young woman captured by pirates or brigands and her father, mother, brother, and sister refuse to pay ransom, but her lover sets her free.



Princess Pat

Oh, the Princess Pat... Lived in a tree...
She sailed across... The seven seas...
She sailed across... The channel too...
And she took with her... A Ricky Bamboo...

A Ricky Bamboo... Now what is that?..
It's something made... By the Princess Pat...
It's red and gold... And purple too...
That's why it's called... A Ricky Bamboo...

Now Captain Jack... Had a mighty fine crew...
He sailed across... The channel too...
But his ship sank... And yours will too...
If you don't take... A Ricky Bamboo...

Oh, the Princess Pat... Saved Captain Jack...
She dived right in... And pulled him back...
She saved his life... And his crew too...
All because she took... A Ricky Bamboo...

The Canadian Girl Scouts, c.1950

This song parodies a marching song sung by Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, whose regimental flag is crimson silk with gold trim. The flag is called the 'Ric-a-Dam-Doo', said to be a corruption of the Gaelic for 'cloth of your mother' in recognition of the fact that Princess Patricia (a granddaughter of Queen Victoria, and Colonel-in-Chief of the regiment) made the original herself.



Process Man

A process man am I and I'm telling you no lie
I've worked and breathed among the fumes that trail across the sky
There's thunder all around me and poison in the air
There's a lousy smell that smacks of Hell and dust all in my hair

*And it's go, boys, go
They'll time your every breath
And every day you're in this place
You're two days nearer death
But you go*

I've worked among the spinners, breathed in the oily smoke
I've shovelled up the gypsum and it nigh on makes you choke
I've been knee-deep in cyanide, got sick with caustic burn
Been working rough, I've seen enough to make your stomach turn

There's overtime, there's bonuses - opportunities galore
The young ones like the money and they all come back for more
But soon you're knocking on, looking older than you should
For every bob made on the job you pay in flesh and blood

Come all you young fellows and a warning hear me say
Don't work for Hooker Chemical on the shores of the Elliot Bay
Don't take the pay and promises, don't bet your youth so strong
Don't end up like me at 33, no one to sing your song

Ron Angel, UK, 1964

Process Man tells of the appalling conditions that Teessiders endured whilst working at ICI and emphasises the process worker's awareness of the long-term effects of a working environment polluted by excessive noise, dust, noxious fumes etc. FSC's final verse is a more recent addition and references Hooker Chemical, a US company that became notorious for environmental negligence in 1977 when residents near its chemical waste site reported extraordinarily high incidences of leukemia, birth defects, and other injuries.



Queenie

There's a low-down tavern where the boys all go
To see Queenie, the star of the burlesque show
But the highlight of the evening is when on the stage she trips
And the band plays the polka while she strips

*Take 'em off, take 'em off!
Cry the boys at the back
Take 'em off, take 'em off!
Be your natural self
But Queenie is a lady and it's only pantomime
So she stops..... but only just in time*

There's another side of Queenie that the boys don't see
She dreams of a cottage surrounded by trees
But the payment of the mortgage takes an awful lot of chips
So the band plays the polka while she strips

Some day, Queenie will fall
Queenie, pride of them all
Some day, church bells will chime...
But only just in time!

Johnny Mercer, USA, 1942

Queenie was written in 1942 as "The Strip Polka" and was originally partially censored on the radio. It was popular with WW2 troops and has been in and out of the FSC songbook since its 1968 inception.



Rattlin' Bog

*Oh, aye, a rattling bog, a bog down in the valley-o
A rare bog, a rattling bog, a bog down in the valley-o*

And in that bog there was a tree,
A rare tree, a rattling tree
And the tree in the bog, and the bog down in the valley-o

And on that tree there was a limb...
And on that limb there was a branch...
And on that branch there was a twig...
And on that twig there was a leaf...
And on that leaf there was a nest...
And in that nest there was an egg...
And on that egg there was a lion...
And on that lion there was a mane...
And on that mane there was a ship...
And on that ship there was a deck...
And on that deck there was a cabin...
And in that cabin there was a table...
And on that table there was a map...
And on that map there was a BOG



Trad, Irish, c.1820

This cumulative song, sometimes known as “The Everlasting Circle” has variants found all over the world. However, the verses from ‘On that egg there was a lion’ appear to be unique to FSC. British eggs have a ‘Lion Mark’ stamped on them to show they are from hens vaccinated against salmonella. Lions have manes, and ‘main’ is an old-fashioned word for the open ocean. The word “rattlin’” means splendid in this context.



The Recruited Collier

Oh what's the matter with you, me lass, and where's your dashing Jimmy?
The soldier boys have picked him up and now he's far, far from me
Last payday he went off to town, and then red-coated fellows
Enticed him and made him drunk and he'd better gone to the gallows

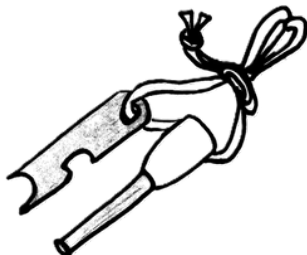
The very sight of his cockade, it sets us all a-crying
And me, I nearly fainted twice, I thought that I was dying
My father would have paid the fine and he ran for the golden guinea
But the sergeant swore he'd kissed the book so now they've got my Jimmy

When Jimmy talks about the wars, it's worse than death to hear him
I must go out and hide my tears because I cannot bear them
A brigadier, a grenadier, he says they're sure to make him
But, aye, he jibes and cracks his jokes and begs me not forsake him

As I walked o'er the stubble field, below it runs the seam
I thought of Jimmy hewing there but it was all a dream
He hewed the very coals we burn and when the fire I'm leeting
To think the coals were in his hands, it sets my heart a-beating

For three long years he'd followed me, now I must live without him
There's nothing now that I can do but weep and think about him
So break my heart and then it's o'er, so break my heart my dearie
For I'll lie in the cold green ground, for of single life I'm weary

Trad, English, c. 1808



Red River Valley

From this valley they say you are going
We will miss your bright eyes and sweet smile
For they say you are taking the sunshine
That has brightened our pathways awhile

*Come and sit by my side if you love me
Do not hasten to bid me adieu
Just remember the Red River Valley
And the cowboy who loved you so true*

Do you think of the valley you're leaving
Oh how lonely, how lonesome 'twill be
Do you think of the fond hearts you're grieving
And the pain you are causing to me

I've been thinking a long time, my darling
Of the sweet words you never would say
Now alas for my fond heart is breaking
For they say you are going away

They will bury me where you have wandered
On the hills where the daffodils grow
When you're gone from the Red River Valley
For I can't live without you, I know

Trad. American, c.1870



Rickety Ticky Tin

About a maid I'll sing a song
Sing rickety tickety tin
About a maid I'll sing a song
Who did not have her family long
Not only did she do them wrong
She did every one of them in, them in
She did every one of them in

Her mother she could never stand
Sing rickety tickety tin
Her mother she could never stand
And so a cyanide soup she planned
The mother died with a spoon in her hand
And her face in a hideous grin, a grin
Her face in a hideous grin

She weighed her brother down with stones
Sing rickety tickety tin
She weighed her brother down with stones
And sent him down to Davy Jones
All they ever found were some bones
And occasional pieces of skin, of skin
And occasional pieces of skin

One morning in a fit of pique
Sing rickety tickety tin
One morning in a fit of pique
She drowned her father in the creek
The water tasted bad for a week
And we had to make do with gin, with gin
We had to make do with gin



She set her sister's hair on fire
Sing rickety tickety tin
She set her sister's hair on fire
And as the smoke and flames rose higher
She danced around the funeral pyre
Playing a violin, 'olin
Playing a violin

One day when she had nothing to do
Sing rickety tickety tin
One day when she had nothing to do
She chopped her baby brother in two
And served him up as an Irish stew
And invited the neighbours in, 'bours in
And invited the neighbours in

And when at last the police came by
Sing rickety tickety tin
And when at last the police came by
Her little pranks she did not deny
To do so she would have had to lie
And lying she knew was a sin, a sin
And lying she knew was a sin

My tragic tale I won't prolong
Sing rickety tickety tin
My tragic tale I won't prolong
And if you do not enjoy my song
You've yourselves to blame if it's too long
You should never have let me begin...



Tom Lehrer, USA, 1953

Tom Lehrer, a 1950's satirist, decided to create a song that had all the ingredients of a folk song: murder, jealousy, senseless crime and a nonsense fol-di-rol-like refrain. He named it "The Irish Ballad (Rickety Tickety Tin)".



Rocking My Babies to Sleep



I'm a charlady's son, and I'm just thirty one
And me wife's ten years younger than me
And I don't like to roam, 'cos I likes to stay home
But me wife she goes out on a spree

And she leaves me behind, the babies to mind
And the house in a good order to keep
But with the fire burning bright, I could sit half the night
Rocking me babies to sleep

*And it's lady, lady, hush-a-bye baby
Mammy'll be coming back by and by
But with the fire burning bright, I could sit half the night
Rocking me babies to sleep*

Well last Saturday night I went out for a stroll
After rocking me babies to sleep
When at the bottom of our street, well who do you think I met
But me wife with a soldier six feet

Well she sobbed and she sighed and she damned nearly died
She say, "Lad I've been thinking of thee"
But with the fire burning bright, I could sit half the night
Rocking me babies to sleep

Trad. Irish, c.1830

Rose, Rose



Trad English, 1500s

Can be sung as a quodlibet with 'Hey, Ho, Anybody Home' (page 88) and 'Ah Poor Bird'.



Rosemary Lane

When I was in service in the Rosemary Lane
I won the goodwill of my master of the day
'Til a sailor came there, one night to lay
And that was the beginning of my misery

He called for a candle to light him to bed
And likewise a silk handkerchief to tie up his head
To tie up his head, as sailors will do
And then said my pretty Polly, will you come too?

Now this maid being young and foolish she thought it no harm
For to lie into bed to keep herself warm
And what was done there I will never disclose
But I wish that short night had been seven long years

Next morning the sailor so early arose
And into my apron three guineas did throw
Saying this I will give, and more I will do
If you'll be my Polly wherever I'll go

Now if it's a boy he shall fight for the King
And if it's a girl she will wear a gold ring
She will wear a gold ring and a dress all aflame
And remember my service in Rosemary Lane

When I was in service in the Rosemary Lane
I won the goodwill of my master of the day
'Til a sailor came there, one night to lay
And that was the beginning of my misery

Trad. English, 1600s

This is one of two songs that "Home Boys Home" is based on, but told from the woman's perspective. Many folk song collectors thought the lyrics too scandalous for print. The 'dress all aflame' may reference sumptuary laws and the myth that sex workers had to wear the colour red to identify themselves.



Sally Free and Easy

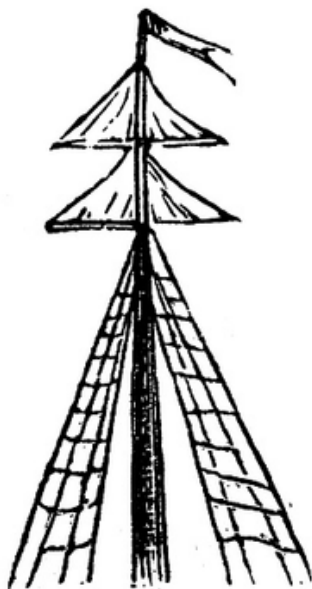
Sally free and easy, that should be her name
Sally free and easy, that should be her name
Took a sailor's loving for a nursery game

All the loving that she gave to me, was not made of stone
All the loving that she gave to me, was not made of stone
It was sweet and hollow like the honeycomb

Think I'll wait till sunset, see the ensign down
Think I'll wait till sunset, see the ensign down
Then I'll take the tideway to my burying ground

Sally free and easy, that should be her name
Sally free and easy, that should be her name
When my body's landed, hope she dies of shame

Cyril Tawney, UK, 1958



Sam Hall

Oh me name it is Sam Hall, chimney sweep, chimney sweep
Oh me name it is Sam Hall, chimney sweep
Oh me name it is Sam Hall and I've robbed both great and small
And me neck will pay for all when I die, when I die
And me neck will pay for all when I die

I have twenty pounds in store, not one more...
I have twenty pounds in store and I'll rob for twenty more
For the rich must help the poor, so must I...

Oh they took me to Cootehill in a cart...
Oh they took me to Cootehill where I stopped to make my will
Saying the best of friends must part, so must I...

Up the ladder I did grope, that's no joke...
Up the ladder I did grope and the hangman pulled the rope
And ne'er a word I spoke, tumbling down...

Oh my name it was Sam Hall, chimney sweep...
Oh my name it was Sam Hall and I robbed both great and small
And my neck it paid for all when I died...

Trad. English, c.1719

Prior to around 1850 the protagonist was called "Jack Hall", after a thief who was hanged at Tyburn in 1707. Jack Hall's parents sold him as a chimney sweep for one guinea.



Santianna

Santianna gained the day

Away, Santianna

Santianna gained the day

All along the plains of Mexico

Heave her up and away we'll go

Away, Santianna

Heave her up and away we'll go

All along the plains of Mexico

He gained the day at Monterrey

And General Taylor ran away

Santianna fought for fame

And Santianna made his name

Santianna fought for gold

He fought for the young and he fought for the old

Santianna lost his leg

Now he fights with a wooden peg

Santianna's dead and gone

And Santianna's day is done

Trad. English sea shanty, 1800s

This sea shanty tells of the Mexican-American war of 1847, during which many British sailors deserted their ships to fight on the side of the Mexicans. In actuality, the Mexican General Antonio Lopez de Santa Ana was defeated by the American General Taylor, but the British sailors chose to remember a different version of history.

Saving for Breakfast

I have eaten all the plums that were in the icebox
I have eaten all the plums that were in the icebox
Which you were probably (probably) saving for breakfast
Which you were probably (probably) saving for breakfast
Forgive me, forgive me, they were so delicious so sweet and so fine
Forgive me, forgive me, they were so delicious so sweet and so fine

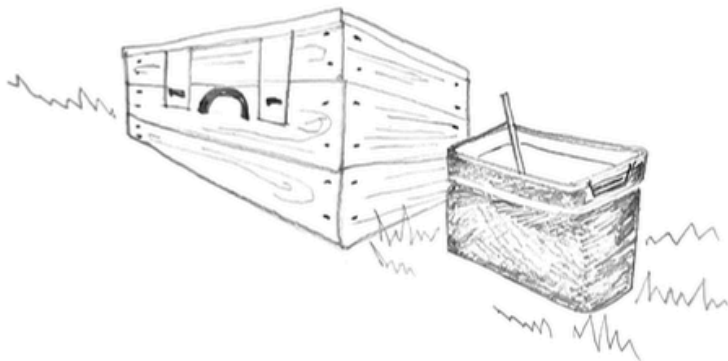
I have eaten all the porridge that was in the haybox...
Which you were probably saving for breakfast...

I have eaten all the cake in the catering tent...
Which you were probably saving for birthday tea...

I have sung all the songs which were in the songbook...
Which you were probably saving for campfire...

William Carlos Williams (1962), Zoe Wang (1999)

Zoe Wang wrote this song (otherwise known as “The Plum Song”) sometime in the late 1990s. The lyrics are from the poem “This Is Just To Say” by William Carlos Williams. FSC has called it “Saving for Breakfast” and it was first sung on South Cornwall.



Scarborough Fair

Are you going to Scarborough Fair?
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
Remember me to one who lives there
She once was a true love of mine

Tell her to make me a cambric shirt
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
Without no seam or needlework
Then she'll be a true love of mine

Tell her to find me an acre of land
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
Between the salt water and the sea strand
Then she'll be a true love of mine

Tell her to plough it with one ram's horn
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
And sow it all over with one peppercorn
Then she'll be a true love of mine

Tell her to reap it with a sickle of leather
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
And gather it all in a bunch of heather
Then she'll be a true love of mine

Trad. English, c.1670

Scarborough Fair is an example of a traditional riddling song, which played an important part in courtship and coming of age rituals in pre-modern England. This song is based on an earlier ballad, titled "The Elfin Knight".

See the Little Engines



Early in the morning
Down upon the railway
See the little engines all in a row
Along comes a man
And he pulls a little handle
Chhh Chhh, Woop Woop, Off we go!

Paul Mills and Slim Gaillard, USA, 1948

Shallow Brown

And it's goodbye, Juliana
Shallow, oh Shallow Brown
And it's farewell, Juliana
Shallow, oh Shallow Brown

I am bound for to leave you
Oh, I am bound for to leave you

And it's get my things in order
For the packet rides tomorrow

And it's Shallow in the morning
Just as the day is dawning

And it's goodbye, Juliana
And it's farewell, Juliana

Trad. Caribbean, 1800s

Popular with sailors in the Caribbean, and perhaps based on an even older song sung by enslaved people. In some versions, an enslaved man named 'Shallow Brown' is sold to an American ship. Some believe "Shallow" to be a corruption of the indigenous Carib word "Challo", which refers to someone of mixed ethnic heritage.



Shawneetown

Well some rows up, but we floats down
Way down the Ohio to Shawneetown

*And it's hard on the beach oar, she moves too slow
Way down to Shawneetown on the Ohio*

Now the current's got her, and we'll take up the slack
We'll float her down to Shawneetown
And we'll bushwack her back

Whisky's in the jar, boys, the wheat is in the sack
We'll trade 'em down to Shawneetown
And we'll bring the rock salt back

I've got a friend in Louisville and one in New Orleans
When I get to Shawneetown gonna see my Indian queen

Water's mighty warm, boys, the air is cold and dank
And that cursed fog it gets so thick you cannot see the bank

Well some rows up, but we floats down
Way down the Ohio to Shawneetown

Dillon Bustin, USA, c.1970

The Shawnee - Šaawanwaki - are an indigenous American group who were dispossessed from their original homeland in the North-Eastern woodlands of the United States and forced to move westwards. Shawneetown was one of their settlements on the Ohio river. "Indian" is thought by some to be an insulting name for indigenous American peoples, but many organisations and individuals prefer the term "American Indian" to "Native American", including the AIM (American Indian Movement).



Shenandoah

Oh Shenandoah, I long to hear you

Away, you rolling river

Oh Shenandoah, I long to see you

Away, we're bound to go, 'cross the wide Missouri

Oh Shenandoah, I love your daughter...

I love the music of your waters...

Oh Shenandoah, I took a notion...

To sail across the stormy ocean...

'Tis seven long years since last I saw you...

'Tis seven long years the love I've borne you...

Oh Shenandoah, I'm bound to leave you...

Oh Shenandoah, I'll not deceive you...

I went away, forsook my lover...

I went away, and took another...

Trad. American, 1800s

The original version of this song referred to a romance between the protagonist and the daughter of Skenandoah, chief of the Oneida - Onyota'aka - one of the five constituent nations of the Haudenosaunee (or Iroquois) confederacy. Since then it has transformed to be about the river in the Appalachian mountains which bears his name.



Shoals of Herring

Oh, it was a fine and a pleasant day
Out of Yarmouth Harbour I was faring
As a cabin boy on a sailing lugger
For to go and hunt the shoals of herring

Oh the work was hard, and the hours were long
And the treatment, sure it took some bearing
There was little kindness, and the kicks were many
As we hunted for the shoals of herring

Oh, we've fished the Swarth and the Broken Bank
I was cook and I'd a quarter sharing
And I used to sleep standing on me feet
And I'd dream about the shoals of herring

Oh we left the home grounds in the month of June
And for Canny Shields we soon was faring
With a hundred cran of the silver darlings
That we'd taken from the shoals of herring

Now you're up on deck, you're a fisherman
You can swear, and show a manly bearing
Take your turn on watch with the other fellows
While you're searching for the shoals of herring

In the stormy seas and the living gales
Just to earn your daily bread you're daring
From the Dover Straits to the Faroe Islands
While you're following the shoals of herring

Oh, I earned my keep and I paid my way
And I earned the gear that I was wearing
Sailed a million miles, caught ten million fishes
We were sailing after shoals of herring



Sing If You're Glad to Be Gay

^{Am}
The British police are the best in the world
^{Dm} I don't believe one of those ^{E7} stories I've heard
^{Am}
About them raiding our clubs for no reason at all
^{Dm} ^{E7}
Lining the customers up by the wall
^{Dm}
Pulling out people, knocking them down
^{E7}
Resisting arrest as they're kicked on the ground
^{Dm}
Raiding our houses, calling us queer
^{E7} ^{Am}
I don't believe that sort of thing happens here

^{Am} ^{Dm}
Sing if you're glad to be gay
^G ^C ^{E7}
Sing if you're happy that way, Hey!
^{Am} ^{Dm}
Sing if you're glad to be gay
^C ^{E7} ^{Am}
Sing if you're happy that way

And don't try to kid us that if you're discreet
You're perfectly safe as you walk down the street
You don't have to mince or to make bitchy remarks
To get beaten unconscious and left in the dark
I had a friend who was gentle and short
He was lonely one evening, he went for a walk
Queerbashers caught him and kicked in his teeth
He was only hospitalised for a week



And sit back and watch as they close down our clubs
Arrest us for meeting and raid all our pubs
Make sure your boyfriend's at least twenty one
So only your friends and your brothers get done
Lie to your workmates, lie to your folks
Put down the queens, tell anti-queer jokes
Gay Lib's ridiculous, join their laughter
Those fellas are legal now... what more are they after?

Tom Robinson, UK, 1978



Until 1967, male homosexuality had been illegal in the UK and men were prosecuted and often imprisoned. It was still illegal in Scotland and Northern Ireland in 1978 when this song was released. The age of consent remained higher than the age of heterosexual consent until 2000. Lesbianism has never been banned in UK law; the Lords decided in 1920 that the “great public danger” of publicising the idea to women outweighed the benefits of banning it.



Sinner Man

Oh sinner man, where you gonna run to?
Oh sinner man, where you gonna run to?
Oh sinner man, where you gonna run to?
All on that day

Run to the sun, sun won't you hide me?
No sinner man, sun'll be a freezing

Run to the moon, moon won't you hide me?
No sinner man, moon'll be a bleeding

Run to the rock, rock won't you hide me?
No sinner man, rock'll be a melting

Run to the sea, sea won't you hide me?
No sinner man, sea'll be a boiling

Run to the Lord, Lord won't you hide me?
No sinner man, you should've been a prayin'

Run to the Devil, Devil won't you hide me?
Yes sinner man, come on in and howdy

Trad. American spiritual, 1800s

An African-American spiritual inspired by the book of Exodus, which tells the story of a sinner who tries to hide from God on Judgment Day but ultimately can't escape God's wrath. This is usually sung as a "quodlibet" or partner song with Drunken Sailor (page 59), and both songs also go with Roll The Old Chariots and Óró, sé do bheatha 'bhaile (not in this book).



Sixteen Tons

I was born one morning when the sun didn't shine
Picked up my shovel and I walked to the mine
I loaded sixteen tons of number nine coal
And the store boss said, "God bless my soul"

*You load sixteen tons and what do you get?
Another day older and deeper in debt
St Peter don't you call me, 'cause I can't go
I owe my soul to the company store*

Now some people say a man is made out of mud
But a poor man's made out of muscle and blood
Muscle and blood, and skin and bone
A mind that's weak and a back that's strong

I was born one morning in the drizzling rain
Fighting and trouble are my middle name
I was raised in the canebrake by an old mother lion
Can't get a high tone woman make me walk the line

Now if you see me coming better step aside
A lot of men didn't and a lot of men died
One fist of iron and the other of steel
If the right one don't get you then the left one will

Merle Travis, USA, 1946

"Sixteen tons" refers to a practice of initiating new miners. In the mid-1920s, a miner tended to haul eight to ten tons per day, whereas for new miners, other miners would slack off so the new miner could "make sixteen" on his very first day. The line 'I owe my soul to the company store' refers to the truck system and debt bondage. Workers were not paid cash; rather they were paid with goods sold at the company store. This made it almost impossible for workers to store up cash savings.



Skye Boat Song

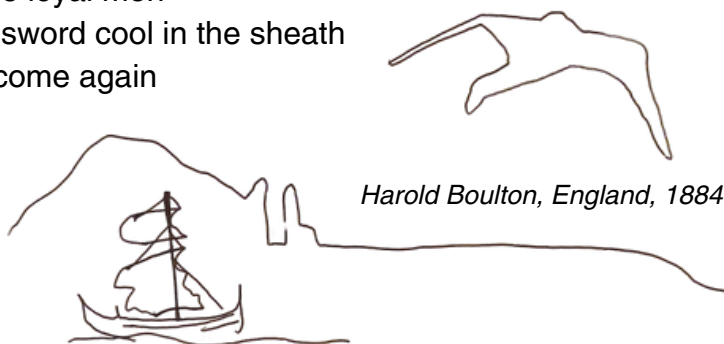
*Speed bonnie boat, like a bird on the wing
"Onward" the sailors cry
Carry the lad that's born to be king
Over the sea to Skye*

Loud the winds howl, loud the waves roar
Thunderclaps rend the air
Baffled, our foes stand by the shore
Follow they will not dare

Many's the lad fought on that day
Well the claymore could wield
When the night came silently lay
Dead on Culloden's field

Though the waves leap, soft shall he sleep
Ocean's a royal bed
Rocked in the deep, Flora will keep
Watch by your weary head

Burned are our homes, exile and death
Scattered the loyal men
Yet e'er the sword cool in the sheath
Charlie will come again



This tells of how Bonnie Prince Charlie escaped from his enemies in the winter of 1745-6 by putting out to sea with Flora MacDonald and a few devoted Highland boatmen in a rising storm - his pursuers were too afraid to follow.



Sloop John B

We come on the sloop John B
My grandfather and me
'Round Nassau town we did roam
Drinkin' all night, got into a fi-i-ight
I feel so break up, I want to go home



*So hoist up the John B sails
See how the main sail sets
Send for the Captain ashore, let me go home
Please let me alone, I want to go ho-o-ome
I feel so break up, I want to go home*

The first mate, oh, he got drunk
He broke up the people's trunk
Constable had to come and take him away
Sheriff Johnstone please let me alo-o-one
I feel so break up, I want to go home

The cook he got the fits
Ate up all of my grits
Then he went and ate up all of my corn
O let me go home, please let me go ho-o-ome
This is the worst trip I've ever been on

Trad. Bahamian, c.1903

First published by EW Prouty, a Massachusetts-based orchestra leader and violinist whose band provided music for hotels including two in Nassau. It's probable that he arranged an existing melody.



Små Grodorna

Små grodorna, små grodorna är lustiga att se
Små grodorna, små grodorna är lustiga att se
Ej öron, ej öron, ej svansar hava de
Ej öron, ej öron, ej svansar hava de
Ko ack ack ack, ko ack ack ack, ko ack ack ack ack ack
Ko ack ack ack, ko ack ack ack, ko ack ack ack ack ack

Små grisarna, små grisarna är lustiga att se
Små grisarna, små grisarna är lustiga att se
Båd ören, båda ören, och svansar hava de
Båd ören, båda ören, och svansar hava de
Å nöff, nöff, nöff, å nöff, nöff, nöff, å nöff, nöff, nöff, nöff, nöff
Å nöff, nöff, nöff, å nöff, nöff, nöff, å nöff, nöff, nöff, nöff, nöff

English Translation:

The little frogs, the little frogs are funny to observe
No ears, no ears, no tails do they possess
[Swedish frog noises]

The little pigs, the little pigs are funny to observe
Both ears, both ears and tails do they possess
[Swedish pig noises]

This Swedish Midsummer classic has actions and involves pretending to be frogs whilst hopping in a circle. Almost everyone in Sweden knows it and will be dancing it at Midsummer, which is as big as Christmas. It originated in a French military song which was mocked by the English and then taken on by the Swedes (the frogs in the song are French soldiers). Swedes are delighted if foreigners get involved in giving this song a go and we don't mind if you mangle the words. Just hop enthusiastically.



Snow Sniffin' Lament

Morphine Bill and Cocaine Sue
Were walking down Fifth Avenue

*Singing honey have a [sniff]
Have a [sniff] on me
Honey have a [sniff] on me*

They came to a drugstore painted green
The sign outside said "no morphine"

They came to a drugstore finished in oak
The sign outside said "no more coke"

They came to a drugstore painted red
The sign outside said "we're all dead"

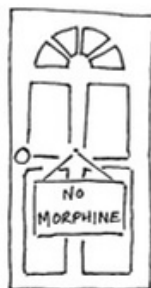
They came to a drugstore painted blue
The sign outside said "we're dead too"

So in the river, side by side
They both committed suicide

And in the graveyard on the hill
Lies the body of Morphine Bill

And in the graveyard by his side
Lies the body of his cocaine bride

The moral of this story goes
There ain't no sense in sniffing snow



Trad. American, 1920s



Sorry the Day I Was Married

Sorry the day I was married
And sorry the day I was wed
And it's oh if I only had tarried
When I to the altar was led

Young William sure there's no pleasing
And let women do what they can
For it's always your heart they'll be teasing
For that is the way of a man

When I was young I was bonny
Had silks and bright jewels to wear
And red were my cheeks as a berry
And my heart it was free from all care

Silks now I have none for me wearing
My jewels have all gone away
And it's surely this life there's no bearing
I'm as pale as a primrose today

Think pretty maids 'ere you marry
Stand fast by your sweet liberty
And it's long as you can you must tarry
And not be lamenting like me

Trad. English, c19th Century

In many periods of British history, marriage resulted in the loss of freedoms for women. Unmarried women were sometimes allowed to work and own property, affording them a degree of control over their lives. Some wealthy unmarried women even had the right to vote in elections. This song was first recorded in Yorkshire in 1904, but is likely much older.

South Australia

In South Australia I was born
Heave away, haul away
In South Australia 'round Cape Horn
We're bound for South Australia

Haul away, you rolling kings
Heave away, haul away
Haul away, oh hear me sing
We're bound for South Australia

As I walked out one morning fair...
'Twas there I met Miss Nancy Blair...

I rolled her up, I rolled her down...
I rolled her round and round the town...

There ain't but one thing grieves my mind...
To leave Miss Nancy Blair behind...

And as we wallop around Cape Horn...
You'll wish to God you'd never been born...

Now here I am in a foreign land...
With a bottle of whisky in me hand...

Port Adelaide is a fine old town...
There's plenty of rum to go around...

Oh when I sailed across the sea...
My girl said she'd be true to me...

I'll drink a glass to the foreign shore...
And one to the girl that I adore...



Trad. sea shanty, 1800s

Stanley and Dora

Stanley and Dora was lovers
They met down the Tottenham Court Road
A whoopin' it up at the Palais
Where the ice cream fountains flowed
He was her man, a Lonny Donegan fan

Now Dora worked at the Dominion
The best usherette in the flicks
She sold Stan a ticket for one and nine
Wot did oughta cost four and six
He left his cosh in his mackintosh

Well Dora was swiftly promoted
To the circle she rose in a dream
When who should she see but young Stanley
Wiv the chick wot sold ice-cream
He'd chucked her up for a Walls' Ice Cup

But justice came soon to poor Dora
For Stan and his Walls' ice cream
They both was killed in the rush for the exit
When they played God Save the Queen
God save our Stan, the only one wot can

Ron Gould, UK, 1950s

"Stanley and Dora" is an English parody of the popular 1904 'murder ballad' "Frankie and Johnny" and employs the same tune.



Star of the County Down

Near Banbridge Town in the County Down
One morning last July
From a breen green came a sweet colleen
And she smiled as she passed me by
She looked so sweet from her two bare feet
To the sheen of her nut brown hair
Such a coaxing elf, sure I shook myself
For to see I was really there

*From Bantry Bay up to Derry Quay
And from Galway to Dublin Town
No maid I've seen like the brown colleen
That I met in the County Down*

As she onward sped, sure I scratched my head
And I looked with a feeling rare
And I says, says I, to a passer-by
“Who’s the maid with the nut-brown hair?”
He smiled at me and he says, says he
“That’s the gem of Ireland’s crown
Young Rosie McCann from the banks of the Bann
She’s the star of the County Down”

At the harvest fair she’ll be surely there
And I’ll dress in my Sunday clothes
With my shoes shone bright and my hat cocked right
For a smile from my nut-brown rose
No pipe I’ll smoke, no horse I’ll yoke
Till my plough turns a rust-coloured brown
Till a smiling bride by my own fireside
Sits the star of the County Down

Cathal MacGarvy, Ireland, c.1880



Stealin'

Put your arms around me like a circle round the sun
You know I love you Mama, like your easy rider done

*You don't believe I love you, look what a fool I've been
You don't believe I'm sinking, look what a hole I'm in
'Cause I'm stealin, stealin, pretty mama don't you tell on me
'Cause I'm a-stealin back to my same old used to be*

The woman I love, she's my size and height
She's a married woman, so you know she treats me right

The woman I love, she's so far away
But the woman I hate, why I see her every day

Come a little closer honey to my breast
And tell me that I am the one you really love the best
And you don't have to worry 'bout any of the rest
'Cause everything's gonna be fine



Trad. American, c.1928

First recorded by the Memphis Jug Band, so-called because they used home-made items (spoons, bones, stovepipes and jugs) to create music. An accomplished jug player could have a two octave range blowing into a jug as a wind instrument.



Streets of London

^C Have you seen the ^G old man
^{Am} In the closed down ^{Em} market
^F Kicking up the ^C papers with his ^{Dm} worn out ^G shoes?
^C In his eyes you see no ^G pride
^{Am} Arms held loosely by his ^{Em} side
^F Yesterday's ^C papers telling ^G yesterday's ^C news
^F So how can you ^C tell me you're ^{C G/B Am} lonely
^D And say for you the sun don't ^G shine? ^{G7}
^C Let me take you ^G by the hand
^{Am} And lead you through the ^{Em} streets of London
^F I'll show you ^C something to ^G make you change your ^C mind

Have you seen the old girl
Who walks the streets of London
Dirt in her hair and her clothes in rags
She's no time for talking
She just keeps right on walking
Carrying her home in two carrier bags

In the all-night café
At a quarter past eleven
Same old man sitting there on his own
Looking at the world
Over the rim of his tea cup
Each tea lasts an hour
Then he wanders home alone



Have you seen the old man
Outside the Seaman's Mission
Memory fading with the medal ribbons that he wears
In our winter city
The rain shows little pity
For one more forgotten hero
In a world that doesn't care

Ralph McTell, UK, 1974

Highlighting the deep problems of the forgotten, homeless, and elderly members of society, McTell's song was actually inspired by individuals in Paris which he visited hitchhiking and busking. His original plan was to call it "Streets of Paris", but the issues highlighted are universal.

Summer is Icumen In
(Middle English)

Sumer is icumen in
Lhude sing cuccu
Groweth sed
And bloweth med
And springth the wude new
Sing cuccu

Awe bleteth after lomb
Lhouth after calve, cu
Bulluc sterteth, bucke verteth
Murie sing cuccu

Cuccu cuccu, well singes
Thou cuccu
Ne swik thou naver nu

Translation
(Modern English)

Summer is a-coming in
Loud the cuckoo sings
Seeds are growing
Meadows are blooming
And wood has new leaves
Sing cuckoo

Ewe bleats after her lamb
Cow lows after her calf
Bullock starts, stag farts
Merry sings the cuckoo

Cuckoo cuckoo, sing well
You cuckoo
Don't ever stop now

This song dates from between 1261 and 1264 and is written in Middle English. It is one of the earliest examples of a non-religious song in English, and is also known as the Summer Canon. It is still sung today as part of Mayday celebrations.

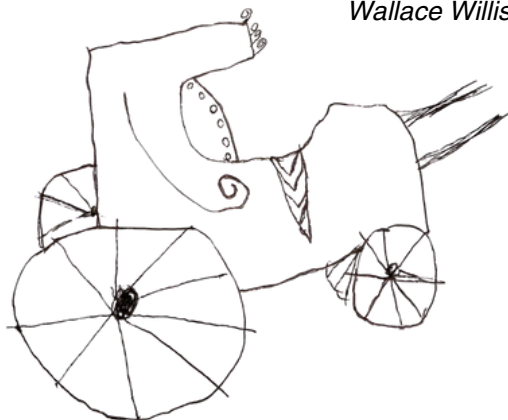
Sweet Chariot

Swing low, sweet chariot
Coming for to carry me home
Swing low, sweet chariot
Coming for to carry me home

I looked over Jordan and what did I see?
Coming for to carry me home
A band of angels coming after me
Coming for to carry me home

If you get to Heaven before I do
Coming for to carry me home
Tell all my friends I'm comin' there too
Coming for to carry me home

Wallace Willis and Minerva Willis, USA, 1860s



Wallace Willis and his daughter Minerva were enslaved people who were freed after the American Civil War and who wrote a number of well-known spiritual songs. "Sweet Chariot" reminds the singers that glory awaits in Heaven, using the Old Testament account of the Prophet Elijah's chariot which ascended to Heaven. Due to the song's origins, its status as rugby anthem has been controversial.



Take This Hammer

Take this hammer, carry it to the Captain
Take this hammer, carry it to the Captain
Take this hammer, carry it to the Captain
You can tell him I'm gone, Lord, you can tell him I'm gone

If he asks you was I running...
You can tell him I was flying, Lord, you can tell him I was flying

If he asks you was I laughing...
You can tell him I was crying, Lord, you can tell him I was crying

I don't want no cold iron shackles...
'Cause they hurts my feet, Lord, 'cause they hurts my feet

I don't want no cornbread and molasses...
'Cause they hurts my pride, Lord, 'cause they hurts my pride

Swing this hammer, it looks like silver...
But it feels like lead, Lord, it feels like lead

Trad. American Work Song, c.1870

Following the abolition of slavery in the United States, many African-American prisoners were forced to perform unpaid labour in mines, railroads, or breaking rocks on the side of roads. Today, forced labour in US prisons continues to be a human rights abuse that disproportionately affects people of colour/black Americans. These 'chain gangs' sang rhythmic songs to punctuate their labour, many of which related to escape from prison. Cornbread and molasses (a byproduct of sugar refining) were standard rations for prisoners in the Southern United States, and also comprised a large part of the diet of enslaved people.



Tall Trees



Tall trees, warm fire
Strong wind, deep water
I can feel it in my body
I can feel it in my bones

Origin Unknown

This Train is Bound for Glory

This train is bound for glory, this train
This train is bound for glory, this train
This train is bound for glory, this train
This train is bound for glory
Don't carry nothing but the righteous and the holy
This train is bound for glory, this train

This train don't carry no gamblers...
No hypocrites, no midnight ramblers...

This train don't carry no rustlers...
Sidestreet walkers, two-bit hustlers...

This train done carried my mother...
Father, sister and my brother...

This train goes down the tracks...
And once on board you don't come back...

Trad. American Gospel, c.1920



Thousands or More

The time passes over more cheerful and gay
Since we've learnt a new act to drive sorrows away
Sorrows away, sorrows away, sorrows away
Since we've learnt a new act to drive sorrows away

Bright Phoebe awakes so high up in the sky
With her red, rosy cheeks and her sparkling eye
Sparkling eye, sparkling eye, sparkling eye
With her red, rosy cheeks and her sparkling eye

If you ask for my credit you'll find I have none
With my bottle and friend you will find me at home
Find me at home, find me at home, find me at home
With my bottle and friend you will find me at home

Although I'm not rich and although I'm not poor
I'm as happy as those that's got thousands or more
Thousands or more, thousands or more, thousands or more
I'm as happy as those that's got thousands or more

Trad. English, c.1850

Phoebe was an ancient Greek Titan, grandmother of the god Apollo and goddess Artemis, and the name has historically been used poetically to refer to the moon.



Tickle Me Pink

Tickle me pink, I'm rosy as a flushed red apple skin
Except I've never been as sweet
I rolled around the orchard
And found myself too awkward
And tickle me green I'm too naive

*Pray for the people inside your head
For they won't be there when you're dead
Muffled out and pushed back down
Pushed back to the leafy ground*

Time is too early, my hair it isn't curly
I wish I was home and tucked away
When nothing goes right
And the future's dark as night
What we need is a sunny, sunny day

Don't know where I can buy myself a brand new pair of ears
Don't know where I can buy a heart
The one I've got is shoddy
I need a brand new body
And then I can have a brand new start

Monsters in the valley and shootings in the alley
And people fall flat at every turn
There is no straight and narrow
Offload your wheelbarrow
And pick up your sticks and twigs to burn

Johnny Flynn, UK, 2008





Tower of Strength

1 I am a tower of strength with - in and with out I am a tower of strength with in I am a
I let

2 All bur dens fall from my shoul-ders all an-xi-e-ties slip from my mind I let

3 Ev-ery shack-le be loose I let ev-ery shack-le be loose I let
I am a

Kath McMillan & Ineke Veerkamp, Australia, c.1985

Tshotsholosa

Tshotsholosa, kwesontaba, stimela siphuma South Africa

Tshotsholosa, kwesontaba, stimela siphuma South Africa

Wena uyabaleka, kwesontaba, stimela siphuma South Africa

Wena uyabaleka, kwesontaba, stimela siphuma South Africa

Trad. Zulu/Ndebele Work Song, c.1900

English Translation:

Steam away over the hills, steam away you train from South Africa.

You are fast-moving through hills, steam away you train from South Africa

Apartheid was a system of racial segregation that was enforced in South Africa by the country's white minority. Black, Indian and mixed-race South Africans were deprived of their freedom and civil rights until the abolition of the apartheid system in the 1990s. This song was sung by African migrant workers travelling from Zimbabwe (at the time under the control of the unrecognized apartheid state of Rhodesia) to work in the mines of South Africa. It became an iconic song in the international anti-Apartheid movement.



Under the Lilacs

She sat under the lilacs and played her guitar
Played her guitar, played her guitar
She sat under the lilacs and played her guitar
Played her guitar-ha-ha-ha

He sat down beside her and smoked his cigar..

He said that he loved her, but oh, how he lied...

She said she believed him, but oh, how she sighed...

They were to be married, but somehow she died...

He went to her funeral but just for the ride...

He sat on her tombstone and laughed till he cried...

The tombstone fell on him and squish-squash, he died...

The parson was passing and popped him inside...

She went to Heaven and flip-flap, she flied...

He went to t'other place and frizzled and fried...

The devils they ate him with pitchforks and knives...

The moral of this story is don't smoke cigars...

Pete Seeger, USA, 1961



Up Above My Head



Up above my head, I can feel it in the air
Up above my head, I can feel it in the air
And I really do believe
They're making music up there

Trad. American Gospel, c.1941

Wade in the Water

Wade in the water, wade in the water
Wade in the water, wade in the water
Wade in the water, wade in the water
God's gonna trouble the water

Wade in the water
Wade in the water, children
Wade in the water
God's gonna trouble the water

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child
A long, long way from home

I wanna die easy when I die
I wanna die easy when I die
I wanna die easy when I die, shout salvation as I rise
I wanna die easy when I die

Trad. American spiritual, 1800s

Wade in the water is a spiritual. The instruction to 'Wade in the water' is thought by some to be a coded message to aid those trying to escape enslavement; by wading in rivers or streams the scent of someone escaping enslavement could not be picked up by the dogs of their pursuers.



Wagon Wheel

^C Heading down south to the land of the pines ^G
^{Am} I'm thumbing my way into North Caroline ^F
^C Staring up the road I pray to God I see headlights ^G ^F
^C I made it down the coast in seventeen hours ^G
^{Am} Picking me a bouquet of dogwood flowers ^F
^C And I'm hoping for Raleigh I can see my baby tonight ^G ^F

So rock me mama like a wagon wheel
Rock me mama any way you feel, hey mama rock me
Rock me mama like the wind and the rain
Rock me mama like a southbound train, hey mama rock me

Running from the cold up in New England
I was born to be a fiddler in an old time string band
My baby plays a guitar, I pick a banjo now
Oh, the north country winters keep a getting me now
I lost my money playing poker so I had to up and leave
But I ain't going back to living that old life no more

Walkin' to the south out of Roanoke
I caught a trucker out of Philly, had a nice long toke
But he's headin' west from the Cumberland Gap to Johnson City, Tennessee
And I gotta get a move on before the sun
I hear my baby calling my name and I know that she's the only one
And if I die in Raleigh, at least I will die free

Bob Dylan & Ketch Secor, USA, 1973

Johnson City is actually *east* of the Cumberland Gap. More importantly, Raleigh is just a three hour drive southeast from Roanoke; going west via the Gap is a six hour detour in the wrong direction. This illustrates the importance of knowing how to use a compass. Also, dogwoods are trees and their flowers are blossoms with short stems so you couldn't really pick a bouquet with them; it'd be an arrangement at best.



The Water

All that I have is a river
The river is always my home
Lord, take me away
For I just cannot stay
Or I'll sink in my skin and my bones

*The water sustains me without even trying
The water can't drown me, I'm done
With my dying*

Please help me build a small boat
One that'll ride on the flow
Where the river runs deep
And the larger fish creep
I'm glad of what keeps me afloat.

Now deeper the water I sail
And faster the current I'm in
That each night brings the stars
And the song in my heart
Is a tune for the journeyman's tale

Now the land that I knew is a dream
And the line on the distance grows faint
So wide is my river, the horizon a sliver
The artist has run out of paint
Where the blue of the sea meets the sky
And the big yellow sun leads me home
I'm everywhere now, the way is a vow
To the wind of each breath by and by



Johnny Flynn, UK, 2010

The Water Is Wide

The water is wide, I cannot get o'er
And neither have I wings to fly
Give me a boat that will carry two
And both shall row, my love and I

Oh down in the meadows, the other day
A-gathering flowers both fine and gay
A-gathering flowers both red and blue
I little thought what love can do

I put my hand into one soft bush
Thinking the sweetest flower to find
I pricked my finger right to the bone
And left the sweetest flower alone

I leaned my back up against some oak
Thinking that he was a trusty tree
But first he bended and then he broke
And so did my false love to me

A ship there is and she sails the sea
She's loaded deep as deep can be
But not so deep as the love I'm in
I know not if I can sink or swim

Oh love is handsome and love is fine
And love's a jewel while it is new
But when it is old, it groweth cold
And fades away like morning dew

Trad English, c.1724



Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key

^G
I lived in a place called Okfuskee
^C
And I had a little girl in a holler tree
^G
^C
I said, little girl, it's plain to see
^G
Ain't nobody that can sing like me
^D ^{Em}
Ain't nobody that can sing like me

^G ^C
She said it's hard for me to see
^G
How one little boy got so ugly
^C
Yes, my little girly, that might be
^G
But there ain't nobody that can sing like me
^D ^{Em}
Ain't nobody that can sing like me

^C ^G
Way over yonder in the minor key
^D ^G
Way over yonder in the minor key
^D ^{Em}
There ain't nobody that can sing like me

We walked down by the buckeye creek
To see the frog eat the goggle eye bee
To hear that west wind whistle to the east
There ain't nobody that can sing like me
Ain't nobody that can sing like me

Oh my little girly will you let me see
Way over yonder where the wind blows free
Nobody can see in our holler tree
And there ain't nobody that can sing like me
Ain't nobody that can sing like me



Way over yonder in the minor key...

Her mama cut a switch from a cherry tree
And laid it on to she and me
It stung much worse than a hive of bees
But there ain't nobody that can sing like me
Ain't nobody that can sing like me

Now I have walked a long long ways
And I still look back to my tanglewood days
I've led lots of girls since then to stray
Saying, ain't nobody that can sing like me
Ain't nobody that can sing like me

Way over yonder in the minor key...

Woody Guthrie, USA, 1946



We All Fly Like Eagles



We all fly like eagles
Flying so high
Circling around the universe
On wings of pure light
Ooh itchi chi-oh oh-i-oh

Origin Unknown

What Will We Do?

What will we do when we'll have no money
All true lovers, what will we do then
Only hawk through the town for a hungry crown
And we'll yodel it over again

What will we do if we marry a tinker
All true lovers, what will we do then
Only sell a tin can and walk on with my man
And we'll yodel it over again

What will we do if we marry a soldier
All true lovers, what will we do then
Only handle his gun and we'll fight for the fun
And we'll yodel it over again

What will we do if we have a young daughter
All true lovers, what would we do then
Only take her in hand and walk on with my man
And we'll yodel it over again

Trad. Irish, 1900s

This version was recorded from Mary Delaney, an Irish traveller, in the 1970s. It bears a strong resemblance to an earlier song by Irish singer Elizabeth Cronin called "What Would You Do If You Married A Soldier?"



Whiskey on a Sunday

^CHe sits at the corner of ^FBeggars Bush
^GAstride of an old packing ^Ccase
And the dolls at the end of the ^Fplank were dancing
As he ^Gcrooned with a smile on his ^Cface
Da da da ^{A7}da, come day ^{Dm}go day
^GWish in me heart it was ^CSunday
La la la ^{A7}drinking buttermilk ^{Dm}all the week
But it's ^Gwhiskey on a ^CSunday

His tired old hands have a wooden beam
And the puppets they dance up and down
A far better show than you ever will see
In the fanciest theatre in town

In 1902 old Seth Davy died
His song was heard no more
The three dancing dolls in the dustbin were thrown
And the plank went to mend the back door

On some stormy night if you're passing that way
And the winds blowing up from the sea
You will still hear the sound of old Seth Davey
As he croons to his dancing girls three

Glyn Hughes, UK, c.1950

The original song contained idioms specific to Liverpool where it is set. Seth Davy was a Jamaican performer who used to perform outside the Bevington Bush Hotel, which has been changed into "beggar's bush" in this version.



Whistling Gypsy Rover

The gypsy rover came over the hill
Down through the valley so shady
He whistled and he sang till the green woods rang
And he won the heart of a lady

*Ah de doo, ah de doo dah day
Ah de doo, ah de day-o
And he whistled and he sang till the green woods rang
And he won the heart of a lady*

She left her father's castle great
Left her own fond lover
Left her servants and her state
To follow the gypsy rover

Her father saddled his fastest steed
And searched his valleys all over
Seeking his daughter at great speed
And the whistling gypsy rover

At last he came to the castle gate
Along the river shady
And there was music and there was wine
For the gypsy and his lady

He is no gypsy, my father, she said
But Lord of these lands all over
And I will stay till my dying day
With my whistling gypsy rover

Leo Maguire, Ireland, c.1950

This song is similar to a number of older ballads which tell of encounters between noble women and traveller men, most of which involve the woman leaving her unhappy marriage to live happily with the traveller. Stories of Gypsy, Roma & Traveller people as seducers and kidnappers have created a stereotype that has been used as an excuse for persecution.



White Cockade

It's true my love's enlisted and he wears the white cockade
He is a handsome young man, likewise a roving blade
He is a handsome young man, most right to serve the King
Oh my very (Oh my very), Oh my very (Oh my very)
Heart is breaking all for the loss of him

As I walked out this morning, as I rambled over yon moss
I had no thought of 'listing, till a soldier did me cross
He kindly did invite me to take a flowing bowl
He advanced... Me the money, two guineas and a crown

My love is tall and handsome and comely for to see
But by a sad misfortune a soldier now is he
May the man that first enlisted him not prosper night or day
How I wish that... He might perish all in the foaming spray

O may he never prosper and may he never thrive
In all he puts his hand upon as long as he's alive
May the very ground he treads upon the grass refuse to grow
Since he has been the... Only cause of my sorrow, grief and woe

Then he's taken out his handkerchief to wipe the flowing eye
Wipe up, wipe up them flowing tears likewise those mournful sighs
And be you of good courage love till I return again
You and I, love... Will be married when I return again

Trad. English, 1700s

Particularly popular in the mining districts of the North of England. A cockade is a coloured rosette that would be worn by soldiers to distinguish sides in battle. Throughout history, it has been common practice for recruiting officers to travel the country and forcibly enlist men to serve in the army or the navy, for example the "press gangs" of the 1700 and 1800s, employed by the Royal Navy to gather sailors. A common myth was that the press gangs would enlist men by tricking them into accepting a coin, for example by paying for their drink, or by getting them drunk enough to 'voluntarily' sign a contract.



Wild Mountain Thyme

The summertime has come
And the trees are sweetly blooming
And the wild mountain thyme
Grows around the blooming heather
Will ye go, lassie, go?

*And we'll all go together
To pull wild mountain thyme
All around the blooming heather
Will ye go, lassie, go?*

I will build my love a bower
By yon clear crystal fountain
And on it I will plant
All the flowers of the mountain

I will build my love a shelter
On yon high mountain green
And my love shall be fairest
That the summer sun has seen

And if my true love she won't come
I will surely find another
To pull wild mountain thyme
All around the blooming heather



Trad. Scottish/Irish, 1800s



Wild Rover

I've been a wild rover for many a year
And I've spent all my money on whiskey and beer
But now I'm returning with gold in great store
And I never will play the wild rover no more

*And it's no, nay, never
No, nay, never, no more
Will I play the wild rover
No, never, no more*

I went into an ale-house I used to frequent
And I told the landlady my money was spent
I asked her for credit, she answered me nay
Such a custom as yours I can get any day

I drew from my pocket ten sovereigns bright
And the landlady's eyes opened wide with delight
She says "I have whisky, and wines of the best
And the words that I spoke then were only in jest"

"I'll have none of your whisky nor fine Spanish wines
For your words show you plainly as no friend of mine
There's others most willing will open the door
To a man coming home from a far distant shore"

I'll go home to my parents, confess what I've done
And I'll ask them to pardon their prodigal son
And if they will do so, as oft times before
Then I never will play the wild rover no more



Woad

What's the use of wearing braces
Hats and spats and boots with laces?
All the things you buy in places
Down the Brompton Road
What's the use of shirts of cotton
Studs that always get forgotten?
These affairs are simply rotten
Better far is woad

Woad's the stuff to show men
Woad to scare your foemen
Boil it to a brilliant blue
And rub it on your back and your abdomen
Ancient Britain never hit on
Anything as good as woad to fit on
Neck or knees or where you sit on
Tailors you be blown

Romans came across the channel
All wrapped up in tin and flannel
Half a pint of woad per man'll
Clothe us more than these
Saxons you can waste your stitches
Building beds for bugs in breeches
We have woad to clothe us which is
Not a nest for fleas

Romans keep your armours
Saxons your pyjamas
Hairy coats were meant for goats
Gorillas, yaks, retriever dogs and llamas
Tramp up Snowdon, with your woad on
Never mind if you get rained or blown on
Never want a button sewed on
Go it, Ancient B's

William Hope-Jones, UK, c.1914



Work Song

Breaking rocks out here on the chain gang
Breaking rocks and serving my time
Breaking rocks out here on the chain gang
'Cause I been convicted of crime

*Hold it steady right there while I hit it
Well I reckon that ought to get it
I've been working, working
But I still got so terribly far to go*

I committed crime Lord of needing
Crime of being hungry and poor
I left the grocery store man breathing
When he caught me robbing his store

I heard the judge say "Five years labour
On the chain-gang you're gonna go"
I heard the judge say "Five years labour"
I heard my old man scream "Lordy, no!"

Gonna see my sweet honey baby
Gonna break this chain off the rock
Gonna lay down somewhere shady
Lord it sure is hot in the sun



Oscar Brown Jr & Nat Adderley, USA, 1960

Inspired by Nat Adderley's childhood experience of seeing a group of men on a chain gang whilst they paved the street in front of his home.



Worried Man

It takes a worried man to sing a worried song
Oh Lord, it takes a worried man to sing a worried song
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song
I'm worried now but I won't be worried long

I swam across the river and laid me down to sleep...
When I woke, there were shackles on my feet

Shackles on my feet and twenty one links of chain...
And every one initialled with my name

I asked the judge, "Oh what's gonna be my fine?"...
Twenty one years on the Rocky Mountain Line

The train I ride is twenty one coaches long...
I'm worried now, but I won't be worried long



Trad. American, c.1920

Likely to have originated with African-American singers, it was first recorded in 1920 by the Carter Family, having learned it orally from an unknown source. The narrative is of a man imprisoned on a chain gang (see glossary) and indentured into forced labour, and the first verse implies his crime might have just been 'vagrancy' - i.e. unemployment and homelessness.



Yellow Roses

I lay on my back with the sun in my eyes
Soon I shall know what no living man knows
All of my life's been a fight against lies
Death brings the truth, now it's my turn to know

*Send my mother a lock of my hair
Send my father the watch that he gave me
Tell my brother to follow me if he dare
Tell them I'm lost now, and no-one can save me
Remember, remember, send my love little yellow roses*

My father taught me that all men are equal
Whatever colour, religion or land
Told me to fight for the things I believed in
This I have done, with a gun in my hand

I met my love in a garden of roses
She pricked her finger, how sharp the thorn grows
We made a promise that 'til death did part us
We'd never look on that wild yellow rose

Trevor Peacock, UK, 1962

The history of this song was only recently unearthed by someone researching for FSC. Writer Trevor Peacock originally wrote it for TV and said "I hadn't heard the song for half a century until your letter arrived". The arrangement is by John Barry, famous for composing for James Bond films and it's been in FSC since the first songbook of 1968. More recently it has been brought back into the wider English folk canon, having been preserved for decades by generations of FSC campers.



You're the Very Devil (Alcohol)

Started drinking, all around town
Went to a club to put a few more down
Feeling bad, drunk and sad
This is going to be the last drink that I'll ever have

Alcohol, alcohol, alcohol, alcohol
You're the very devil. Get away from me

I got in with a crowd, we got in a car
I went to a party, I played a guitar
I never played well, it must have been hell
Made a fool of myself, of that I can tell

I fell in the door, I fell on the street
I fell on the floor, I fell in a heap
I blundered on home, battered and blown
Swore to the Lord to leave it alone

Next thing I knew, I was back home in bed
My papa was there, he was holding my head
My mama was there, in her nightclothes
Holding a bucket right under my nose

Early next day, I was all in a fuzz
Feeling ashamed, I started to curse
All the money I'd earned, I'd been out and burned
It's a lesson I feel I never seem to learn

Tom Goddard, UK, 1980s

This was heard by an FSC staff member from a singer at Cecil Sharp House, London, in the early 1990s. We believe that the singer was called Tom Goddard and that he also wrote the song. No other records of song or singer have been identified and so this song appears to have only been preserved within the FSC Glee tradition.



Contextualising our songbook

The Forest School Camps songbooks have always been a hodgepodge of musical traditions. Since the publication of the very first songbook in 1968, “modern” popular tunes have nestled between Caribbean work songs, gospel hymns hailing from the United States, and drinking songs from Ireland. The dominant genre of each songbook, however, has been music that could be described as “traditional English folk”. From the 1800s, scholars and enthusiasts set out to write down and preserve the songs that normal people were singing: songs that were often passed orally from singer to singer in the pub or the field or around the kitchen fire, where each new singer would mould the song a little bit to make it their own. The songs these folk song collectors found were used to create long indexes of lyrics and music, which continue to shape our understanding of which songs do and do not count as “traditional English folk”. This scholarship ensured the survival of many songs that may otherwise have been forgotten, but it has in some ways artificially shaped our imagination of what the English folk genre can sound like - we tend to imagine English folk music mainly in the language of the 19th century, full of pretty maids and bold sailors.

Britain is also home to distinct folk music traditions sung in the Scots, Gaelic, Cornish and Welsh languages. There is only one song in this songbook sung in any of these languages: ‘The Burning of Auchindoun’ which is sung in Scots. “English” and “British” shouldn’t be used interchangeably; the music we are discussing is the “English” folk genre, but the empire that moulded this tradition was “British” rather than “English”

Many of the songs we sing are as traditional and British as a mug of tea sweetened with a teaspoon of sugar: their constituent parts are not really traditionally British at all, but a product of the British Empire. For hundreds of years, the British state ruled over huge chunks of the globe, using extortion, exploitation, and violence to enrich itself at the expense of the rest of the world. Sugar was grown in the Caribbean by enslaved people who had been taken prisoner in Africa, forced to board boats and taken across the Atlantic to work on British plantations in Jamaica, Barbados or the Bahamas. Many enslaved Africans did not survive this terrible journey, known as the “middle passage”. Those that did were often subject to brutal treatment at the hands of their enslavers, yet still created a vibrant musical tradition that combined traditional West African music with Biblical stories and ballads originating in the British Isles - examples of this can be found in this songbook.

Like the British habit of drinking tea, many of the songs we now consider to be British were the product of interactions and exchanges between Britain and its colonial empire - some have even theorised that the call-and-response form of sea shanties was adopted from West African music sung by enslaved peoples in the Caribbean. Money from slavery and from the compensation the British government paid to slave owners on its abolition in 1833 was invested in railways, factories, and the large manor houses that dot the British countryside. While the law abolishing slavery was passed in 1833, most enslaved people were forced to serve terms of “apprenticeship” for 6 years, during which they continued to do forced and unpaid labour for their former enslavers. Through connections such as these, people in Britain continue to benefit from the system of slavery and its economic legacies.

Many of the techniques of violence and subjugation used by the British empire were first tested in Ireland, a country which contributes a large contingent of songs to the FSC songbook. For centuries, Irish people were pushed off their land by English and Scottish settlers, forced to farm poorer and poorer land. This process led to the Great Famine of 1845-52 in Ireland, during which time nearly half of the Irish population died or fled abroad.

These histories are not a reason to stop singing any of the songs in the songbook - if we tried to remove the legacies of the British Empire from modern British culture we would not be left with very much. It is our historical responsibility, however, to be conscious of these histories; to honour those whose songs we are singing; to hold on to an understanding that the culture in which many of these songs evolved was based upon subjugation of other cultures; and to treat with respect the cultures and peoples from whom so much of our music is drawn. Regardless of their origins, these songs have become part of our musical canon, and FSC continues to incorporate songs from different contexts into our unique oral tradition. This new version of the songbook has been created with the goal of increasing our awareness of the interconnected and complex histories of our music. It seeks to accredit those who have made contributions to our organisation's musical tradition, and highlight the diversity of origin of the songs we sing. Our hope is that by facing up to this history, we will be able to learn from it.

Glossary

Ballad: A popular narrative song, often passed down orally. In the English tradition, it usually follows a form of rhymed (abcb) quatrains alternating four-stress and three-stress lines.

Broadside: A single sheet of inexpensive paper with a song printed on it. Broadside songs began to appear in the 1500s and 1600s, became a big industry in the 1700s and 1800s, and were popular in Britain until the 1900s. They could be sung or recited in public places, such as taverns, homes, and fairs, and sold in the streets by peddlers. They would normally not include melodies, but would sometimes suggest a well-known tune that could be used. Many traditional folk songs and ballads derive from printed broadsides.

Bum/Hobo/Tramp: After the American Civil War ended in 1865 and until WWII in the 1940s, thousands of homeless men hitched rides on railway freight cars, travelling in the hope of work and living a life of destitution and desperation. They were famously characterised as occupying three separate categories: "hobos worked and travelled, tramps just travelled, and bums did neither."

Chain gang: A group of convicts chained together to perform work outside of a prison. Following the end of the American Civil War and the abolition of slavery in the United States, African-American men continued to be exploited for their labour through the prison system. Black men would be arrested on spurious charges and forced to perform free labour for the state. In 1912, the National Committee on Prison Labor decried chain gangs as "the last vestige of the slave system," claiming that hundreds, and possibly thousands, of prisoners had lost their lives as a result of abuse and malnutrition. While chain gangs no longer exist, prison labour remains a multi-billion dollar business in the USA, with many charities arguing that the prison labour system constitutes a violation of the fundamental human rights of prisoners.

Gospel: A genre of Christian music which varies in style depending on cultural and social context, although it tends to be sung a capella. In the United States, gospel music has traditionally been associated with African-Americans living in the South, and continues to form the basis for church worship in black communities. Gospel has been a key influence in the development of many other musical genres, including blues, soul and pop music.

Sea shanty (Capstan/Halyard/Fo’c’sle): Sailors sung sea shanties to keep time with their labour as it was often more efficient to have everyone working at the same time. The shantyman would choose a suitable song for the type and length of task and would continue to make up verses if required for the job to be finished. There were a number of different types of sea shanty, including:

- **Capstan shanty:** A capstan is a rotating lever or windlass developed for use on sailing ships to multiply the pulling force of seamen when hauling ropes, cables, and hawsers. Capstan shanties therefore tend to have lyrics which encourage pulling all at the same time, e.g. “Heave away” but do not necessarily need to be fast or even particularly rhythmical
- **Halyard shanty:** Halyard shanties were sung to the raising and lowering of sails, or other long, heavy tasks which involved a pull and relax rhythm. “Blow the Man Down” is a good example of this. The shantyman would sing a line of a song, and the crew would respond in chorus hauling on the rope
- **Fo’c’sle song:** While at rest, sailors often sung slower and sadder tunes. These songs are named after the “Fo’c’sle” or “Fore-castle” of the ship, where crewmates would drink, eat, and sing while off shift. Also referred to as “forebitters”

Spiritual: A religious song of hope traditionally sung by enslaved people in the US, and associated with black Christians of the southern US. Thought to derive from the combination of European hymns and musical elements originating in West Africa, which were preserved by enslaved people.

Trad: “Traditional” - generally used to mean that the authorship of a particular song is unknown, and/or that a song is in part the product of evolution through oral transmission.

Work song: A piece of music closely connected to a form of work, often to coordinate timing. Records of work songs are as old as historical records, and anthropological evidence suggests that most pre-industrial societies tend to have them. Many FSC work songs are linked to slavery in the Southern American states. Enslaved people brought the call-and-response tradition of West African singing to their work songs, and many prisoners forced to perform hard labour carried this tradition into the 1900s. There are also strong echoes of African-American work songs in the sea shanty tradition (tall ship crews would often be notably multicultural, with an estimated 15-20% of crew of African-American origin).

Some extra pages to write on



Some extra pages to write on



Some extra pages to write on



THE END.



MY BLOOD - AIR MY BREATH
MY BODY - WATER
FIRE MY SPIRIT - EARTH
AIR
MY BREATH -

