

'Singlish Folk'

Broadsheet

Number 30

Barbara Allen (versions 1 to 4)
Billy Boy
Darkie's Sunday School
Lord Randal
My Lagan Love

Barbara Allen (version 1)

1. In scarlet town where I was born
There was a fair maid dwellin'
Made every youth cry well a day
He name was Barbara Allen
2. 'Twas in the merry month of May
When new buds were a swellin'
Sweet Willian on his death bed lay
For love of Barbara Allen
3. So slowly, slowly got she up
And slowly she came nigh him
And all she said when she got there
Young man I think you're dyin'
4. And as she tripped it lightly home
She heard the church bell tollin'
And every bell did seem to say
Hard hearted Barbara Allen
5. Oh mother, mother make my bed
Oh make it low and narrow
Sweet William died for me today
I'll die for him tomorrow
6. They buried her in yon grave yard
And buried Will beside her
And on his grave there grew a rose
And out of hers a briar
7. They grew and grew right up the wall
Till they could grow no higher
Then twined into a lovers knot
The red rose and the briar

Barbara Allen (version 2)

It being late, all in the year,
the green leaves they were fallin'
when young Johnny rose from his own country,
fell in love with Barbara Allen.

Get up, get up, her mother says,
Get up and go and see him,
Oh, mother dear, do ye not mind the time
That you told me how to slight him.

Get up, get up, her father says,
Get up and go and see him,
Oh, father dear, do ye not mind the time
That you told me how to shun him.

Slowly, slowly she got up,
and it's slowly she put on her,
Slowly she went to his bedside,
And slowly looked upon him.

You're lyin' low, young man, she says,
And almost near a-dyin'
One word from you will bring me to,
If you be Barbara Allen.

One word from me you never will get,
Nor any young man breathin',
For the better of me you never will be,
Though your heart's blood was a-spillin'.

Look down, look down, at my bed foot,
It's there you'll find them lyin'
Bloody sheets and bloody shirts
I sweat them for you, Allen

Look up, look up to my bed head,
and there you'll find them hangin'
my gold watch and my gold chain
I bestow them to you, Allen

As she was goin' home to her father's hall,
she heard the death-bell ringin'
And every clap that the death-bell gave,
It was "Woe be to you, Allen"

As she was goin' home to her mother's hall,
She saw the funeral comin'
Lay down, lay down that weary corpse,
'Til I get lookin' on 'im

She lifted up the lid off the corpse,
and bursted out with laughin'
and all his weary friends around
Cried "hard hearted Barbara Allen"

She went into her mother's house
Make my bed long and narrow
For the death-bell did ring for my true love today
It will ring for me tomorrow

Out of one grave there grew a red rose
Out of the other a briar
And they both twisted into a true lover's knot,
And there remained forever

Barbara Allen (version 3)

In Scotland I was born and bred
In Scotland I was dwelling;
When a young man on his deathbed lay
For the sake of Barb'ra Ellen.

He sent his servant to her house
To the place where she was dewlling,
Saying, "You must come to my master's house
If your name is Barb'ra Ellen."

So slowly she put on her clothes
So slowly she came to him,
And when she came to his bedside
She said, "Young man, you're dying."

"A dying man! O don't say so.
For one kiss from you will cure me."
"One kiss from me you never shall have
While your poor heart is breaking."

"If you'll look up at my bed-head
You will see my watch a-hanging;
Here's my gold ring and my gold chain
I give to Barb'ra Ellen."

"If you look down at my bed's-foot
You will see a bowl a-standing
In it is the blood I've shed
For the sake of Barb'ra Ellen."

As she was walking down the lane
She heard some birds a-singing,
And as they sang, they seemed to say:
"Hard-hearted Barb'ra Ellen."

As she was walking down the lane
She heard some bells a-tolling,
And as they tolled they seemed to say:
"Hard-hearted Barb'ra Ellen."

As she was walking up the groves
And met his corpse a-coming,
"Stay, stay," said she, "and stop awhile
That I may gaze all on you."

The more she gazed, the more she smiled
Till she burst out a-laughing;
And her parents cried out:
"Fie, for shame, Hard-hearted Barb'ra Ellen."

"Come mother, come make up my bed
Make it both long and narrow;
My true love died for me yesterday
I'll die for him tomorrow."

And he was buried in Edmondstone
And she was buried in Cold Harbour;
And out of him sprang roses red
And out of her sweet-brier.

It grew and grew so very high
Till it could grow no higher;
And around the top grewed a true lover's knot
And around it twined sweet-brier.

Barbara Allen (version 4)

1. It was in and about the Martinmas (1) time,
When the green leaves were a-falling,
That Sir John Graeme, in the West country,
Fell in love with Barbara Allen.

2. He sent his men down through the town
To the place where she was dwelling (2):
"O haste (3) and come to my master dear,
Gin ye be (4) Barbara Allen."

3. O hooly, hooly (5) rose she up,
To the place where he was lying,
And when she drew the curtain by'
"Young man, I think you're dying."

4. "O it's I'm sick, and very, very sick,
And it's a' (6) for Barbara Allen;"
"O the better for me you shall never be,
Though your heart's blood were a spilling."

5. "O dinna ye mind (7), young man," she said,
"When the red wine ye were filling,
That ye made the healths gae (8) round and round,
And slighted (9) Barbara Allen?"

6. He turned his face unto the wall,
And death was with him dealing (10);
"Adieu (11), adieu, my dear friends all,
And be kind to Barbara Allen."

Glossary:

1. November 11
2. living
3. hurry up
4. if you are
5. slowly
6. all
7. don't you remember
8. drank some toasts; go
9. upset
10. doing business
11. goodbye

Darkies' Sunday School

Young folks, old folks, everybody come,
Join the darkies' Sunday School and make yourself at home,
Bring a stick of licquorice and sit upon the floor,
And I'll tell you Bible stories that you've never heard before.

The world was made in six days and finished on the seventh,
According to the contract, it should have been the eleventh;
But the painters wouldn't paint and the workers wouldn't work,
So the quickest thing to do was fill it in with dirt.

Adam was a gardener and Eve, she was his spouse,
They got the sack for stealing fruit and went to keeping house.
They lived a very quiet life and peaceful in the main
Until they had a baby and started raising Cain.

Joseph was shepherd, too, he kept his father's goats,
His father used to dress him in the very loudest coats.
His brothers they got jealous and threw him in a well
Joseph went to Heaven and the other's went to ____.

Pharaoh had a daughter, she had a winsome smile,
She found the infant Moses a-floating on the Nile.
She took him to her father with the old familiar tale,
So pharaoh winked his eye and said I've heard that one before.

Jonah was landsman who thought he'd like a sail;
So he took a steerage passage on a transatlantic whale;
When the fishy atmosphere grew heavy on his chest,
Jonah pushed a button and the whale did all the rest.

Ahab had a lively wife whose name was Jezebel,
When looking out the window, to the dogs below she fell.
"She's gone to the dogs," the people told the king;
Ahab said, he never heard of such a doggone thing.

God made Satan, Satan made sin,
God made a hot place to put Satan in.
Satan didn't like it so he said he wouldn't stay,
He's been acting like the devil ever since that day.

Jehu drove a chariot in the Peloponnesian war
And later graduated to a corporation car
So shouting 'Fares please, fares please' he drove with
fearsome zeal
Till little bits of Jezebel go tangled in the wheel

When This Bloody War is Over



When this bloody war is over
Oh, how happy I will be;
When I get my civvy clothes on
No more soldiering for me.

Civvy = Civilian

1. No more church parades on Sunday
No more begging for a pass;
I will tell the Sergeant Major
To stuff his passes up his ass.

2. I will sound my own reveille
I will beat my own tattoo;
No more NCOs to curse me,
No more fucking Army stew.

My Lagan Love

Where Lagan stream, sing lullaby
There blows a lily fair
When twilight gleam, is in her eyes
The night is on her air
And like a love - sick Lenanshee
She hath my heart in thrall
No life have I, no liberty
With love is lord of all

And sometimes when, the beetles horn
Hath lulled the eve to sleep
I steal unto her shielding lorn
And through her dooreen peep
There on the cricket's, singing stone
She stirs the bog wood fire
And hums in soft, sweet undertones
The song of heart's desire

Her welcome, like her love for me
Is from her heart within
Her warm kiss, is felicity
That knows no taint of sin

A Lenanshee (Leanain Sidhe or Leannan Sidhe) mystic Celtic figure. Means fairy lover, fairy mistress. Antipode to banshee.

Billy Boy (Variation Child number 12)

Oh where have you been, Billy Boy,
Billy Boy?
Oh where have you been, charming Billy?
I have been to seek a wife,
She's the joy of my life,
She's a young thing
And cannot leave her mother.

Did she bid you to come in, Billy Boy,
Billy Boy?
Did she bid you to come in, tell me Billy?
Yes, she bade me to come in,
There's a dimple in her chin.
She's a young thing
And cannot leave her mother.

Did she set you a chair, Billy Boy?
Billy Boy?
Did she set you a chair, tell me Billy.
Yes, she set for me a chair,
She has ringlets in her hair,
She's a young thing
And cannot leave her mother.

Can she bake cherry pie, Billy Boy,
Billy Boy?
Can she bake cherry pie, tell me Billy.
She can bake a cherry pie,
There's a twinkle in her eye.
She's a young thing
And cannot leave her mother.

Notes on Lord Randal/Billy Boy

Sir Walter Scott associated the ballad with the death of Thomas Randolph (Randal), Earl of Murray - (or Moray), Robert the Bruce's nephew. Randolph died at Musselburgh in 1332 and some suggested because the death was so untimely for Scotland, it could have been caused by poison.

*In The Journal of Folk Song Society (Vol.ii., No. 6 and Vol. iii., No. 10) Miss Gilchrist suggests the identity of Lord Randal is the sixth Earl of Chester, who died in 1232. The said Earl was poisoned by his wife.**

Lord Randal (Child number 12)

Where have you been all the day,
Randal, my son?
Where have you been all the day,
My pretty one?
I've been to my sweetheart, mother
I've been to my sweetheart, mother

Chorus:
Make my bed soon
For I'm sick to my heart
And I fain would lie down.

What have you been eating,
Randal, my son?
What have you been eating,
My pretty one?
O eels and eel broth mother,
O eels and eel broth mother,

Chorus

Where did she get them from,
Randal, my son?
Where did she get them from,
My pretty one?
From hedges and ditches, mother,
From hedges and ditches, mother.

Chorus

What was the colour on their skin,
Randal, my son?
What was the colour on their skin,
My pretty one?
O spickit and sparkit, mother,
O spickit and sparkit, mother

Chorus

What will you leave your father,
Randal my son?
What will you leave your father,
My pretty one?
My land and houses, mother,
My land and houses, mother

Chorus

What will you leave your mother,
Randal my son?
What will you leave your mother,
My pretty one?
My gold and silver mother,
My gold and silver, mother

Chorus

What will you leave your brother,
Randal my son?
What will you leave your brother,
My pretty one?
My cows and horses, mother
My cows and horses, mother

Chorus

What will you leave your lover,
Randal my son?
What will you leave your lover,
My pretty one?
A rope to hang her, mother
A rope to hang her, mother

Chorus