

'Singlish Folk'

Broadsheet

Number 24

Lady Madonna

Lady Madonna, children at your feet
Wonder how you manage to make ends meet
Who finds the money when you pay the rent
Did you think that money was heaven sent

Friday night arrives without a suitcase
Sunday morning creeping like a nun
Monday's child has learned to tie his bootlace
See how they run

Lady Madonna, baby at your breast
Wonder how you manage to feed the rest
Lady Madonna, lying on the bed
Listen to the music playing in your head

Tuesday afternoon is never ending
Wednesday morning papers didn't come
Thursday night your stockings needed mending
See how they run

Lady Madonna, children at your feet
Wonder how you manage to make ends meet

Short'nin' Bread (Traditional Plantation Song)

Two little babies, lying in bed
One was sick and the other 'most dead
Sent for the doctor and the doctor said
"Give those children some shortnin' bread."

Chorus:
Mama's little baby loves shortnin', shortnin'
Mama's little baby loves shortnin' bread
Mama's little baby loves shortnin', shortnin'
Mama's little baby loves shortnin' bread

Put on the skillet, slip on the lid
Mama's gonna bake a little short'nin' bread
This ain't all she's gonna do
Mama's gonna make a little coffee, too.
CHORUS

When those children, sick in bed
Heard that talk about short'nin' bread
Popped up well, to dance and sing
Skipped around and cut the pigeon wing.
CHORUS

slipped in the Kitchen, slipped up the lid
Slipped my pocket full of shortnin' bread
Stole the skillet, stole the lid
Stole the gal to make shortnin' bread
CHORUS

Caught with the skillet, caught with the lid
Caught with the gal makin' shortnin' bread
Paid 6 dollars for the skillet, 6 dollars for the lid
Spent 6 months in jail eatin' shortnin' bread...
CHORUS

Note: This is the 'politically correct' version. The word 'nigger' a corruption of the word negro (French) used for African Americans, is now considered to be very offensive and has associations with the Klu Klux Klan etc. The original version follows.

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Shortenin' Bread (Traditional)

Two little niggers, Lyin' in bed
One of 'em sick, An' de odder mos' dead.
Call for de doctor, An' de doctor said,
"Feed dem darkies on shortenin' bread"

cho: Mammy's little baby loves
Shortenin', shortenin',
Mammy's little baby love shortenin' bread.

Stole de skillet, Stole de lead
Stole dat gal makin' shortenin' bread.
Got 6 months fo' de skillet, got 6 months fo' de led;
Got six months fo' de gal makin' shortenin' bread.

Went to de kitchen an' kicked off de led,
An' filled my pockets full o' shortenin' bread.
Shortenin' bread an' it baked thin,
Dat what it take to make 'em grin.

Put on de skillet, put on de led,
My lil baby wants shortenin' braad.
Two little niggers upstairs in bed,
One turned over an' to de odder said,

"How about dat shortenin' bread,
How about dat shortenin' bread,"
One lil nigger a-layin' in de bed,
His eyes shet an' still, like he been dead.

Two lil niggers a-layin' in de bed,
A-snorin' an' a-dreamin' of a table spread.
W'en de doctor come he simpully said,
"Feed dat boy some shortenin' braad."

T'other lil nigger sick in de bed,
W'en he hear tell o' shortenin' bread,
Popped up well, he dance an' sing,
He almos' cut de pigeon wing.

I do love liquor, an' I will take a dram,
I'd ruther be a nigger dan' a po' white man.

From American Ballads & Folk Songs, 1934, by John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax.

Norwegian Wood

I once had a girl or should I say she once had me
She showed me her room isn't it good Norwegian wood

She asked me to stay and she told me to sit anywhere
But I looked around and I noticed there wasn't a chair

I sat on a rug biding my time drinking her wine
We talked until two and then she said it's time for bed

She told me she worked in the morning and started to laugh
I told her I didn't and crawled off to sleep in the bath

And when I awoke I was alone this bird had flown
So I lit a fire isn't it good Norwegian wood

Parachute Song of World War II

Is everybody happy said the sergeant looking up
Our hero feebly answered "Yes"
and then they hooked him up,
He jumped into the slipstream,
and he twisted twenty times,
And he ain't going to jump no more.

Chorus

Glory glory what a hell of a way to die
When your hanging from your braces
and you don't know how to fly,
Glory glory what a hell of a way to die,
And he ain't going to jump no more.

He counted loud he counted long
and waited for the shock,
He felt the wind, he felt the air,
he felt that awful drop,
He pulled his lines, the silk came down
and wrapped around his legs
And he ain't going to jump no more.

The days he lived and loved and laughed
kept running through his mind,
He thought about the medics
and wondered what they would find,
He thought about the girl back home,
the one he left behind.
And he ain't going to jump no more.

The lines all wrapped around his neck,
the D rings broke his dome,
His lift webs wrapped themselves in knots
around each skinny bone,
His canopy became his shroud
as he hurtled to the ground,
And he ain't going to jump no more.

The ambulance was on the spot,
the jeeps were running wild,
The medics, they clapped their hands
and rolled their sleeves and smiled,
For it had been a week or more,
since last a chute had failed,
And he ain't going to jump no more.

He hit the ground, the sound was "splat"
the blood went spurting high,
His pals were heard to say
"Oh what a lovely way to die",
They rolled him up still in his 'chute,
and poured him from his boots,
And he ain't going to jump no more.

Sylvest

Have you heard about the big strong man,
he lived in a caravan?
Have you heard about the Jeffrey--Johnson fight?
Oh, what a hell of a fight
You can take all the heavyweights you got,
What do you got Got a lad who could beat the whole lot
He used to ring the bells in the belfry
Now he's gonna fight Jack Dempsey

Chorus:

That's me brother Sylvest - What's he got
He' got a row of forty medals on his chest - Big chest
Killed fifty bad men in the west He knows no rest
Bigger the man, don't push, just shove
Plenty of room for you and me
He's got an arm, like a leg, Lady's leg
And a punch that would sink a battleship - Big ship
Takes all the army and the navy to put the wind up Sylvest

He Jumped Without a Parachute

(To the tune John Browns Body)

He jumped without a parachute from twenty thousand feet (x3)
And he aint gonna jump no more

Glory glory what a hell of a way to die (x3)
And he aint gonna jump no more

He landed on the pavementlike a lump of strawberry jam (x3)
And he aint gonna jump no more

They put him in a match box and they sent him home to mum
And he aint gonna jump no more

She put on the mantel piece for everyone to see (x3)
And he aint gonna jump no more

She put him on the table when the Vicar came to tea (x3)
And he aint gonna jump no more

The Vicar spread him on some toast
and said what lovely jam (x3)
And he aint gonna jump no more

To the Beggin' I will go

Of all the trades in England, a-beggin' is the best
For when a beggar's tired, You can lay him down to rest.
And a-begging I will go, a-begging I will go. (x2)

I got a pocket for me oatmeal, and another for me rye.
I got a bottle by me side to drink when I am dry.
And a-begging I will go, a-begging I will go. (x2)

I got patches on me cloak, and black patch on me knee.
When you come to take me home, I'll drink as well as thee.
And a-begging I will go, a-begging I will go. (x2)

I got a pocket for me ... and another for me malt
I got a pair of little crutches, you should see how I can halt.
And a-begging I will go, a-begging I will go. (x2)

I sleep beneath an open tree, and there I pay no rent.
Providence provides for me, and I am well content.
And a-begging I will go, a-begging I will go. (x2)

I fear no plots against me. I live an open cell.
Who would be a king then when beggars live so well.
And a-begging I will go, a-begging I will go. (x2)

Of all the trades in England, a-begging is the best.
For when a beggar's tired, you can lay him down to rest.
And a-begging I will go, a-begging I will go. (x2)

He thought he'd take a trip to Italy
He thought that he'd go by the sea
He jumped off the harbor in New York,
And he swam like a man made of cork
He saw the Lusitania in distress - What'd he do
Put the Lusitania on his chest - Big chest
Drank up all the water in the sea
And walked all the way to Italy

He'd thought he take a trip to old Japan
And they pull out the whole brass band
He played every instrument you got
Like a lad he beat the whole lot
The old Church bells will sing Hell's Bells
The old Church choir will sing Hell's fire
The all turned out to say farewell to my big brother Sylvest

Gypsy Rover

A gypsy rover came over the hill
Down through the valley so shady.
He whistled and he sang 'til the green woods rang
And he won the heart of a lady.

Ah-dee-doo-ah-dee-doo-dah-day
Ah-dee-doo-ah-dee-day-dee
He whistled and he sang 'til the green woods rang
And he won the heart of a lady.

She left her father's castle gate.
She left her own fine lover.
She left her servants and her state
To follow her gypsy rover.

She left behind her velvet gown
And shoes of Spanish leather
They whistled and they sang 'till the green woods rang
As they rode off together

Last night, she slept on a goose feather bed
With silken sheets for cover
Tonight she'll sleep on the cold, cold ground
Beside her gypsy lover

Her father saddled up his fastest steed
And roamed the valley all over.
Sought his daughter at great speed
And the whistlin' gypsy rover.

He came at last to a mansion fine
Down by the river Claydee.
And there was music and there was wine
For the gypsy and his lady.

"Have you forsaken your house and home?
Have you forsaken your baby?
Have you forsaken your husband dear
For a whistling gypsy rover?"

"He is no gypsy, my Father," she cried
"but Lord of these lands all over.
And I shall stay 'til my dying day
with my whistlin' gypsy rover."

Carrickfergus

I wish I was in Carrickfergus
Only for nights in Ballygrand
I would swim over the deepest ocean
But only for nights in Ballygrand
But the sea is wide and I cannot swim over
And neither have I the wings to fly
I wish I had a handsome boatman
To ferry me over my love and I

Now in Kilkenny it is reported
On marble stones there, as black as ink
With gold and sliver I would support her
But I'll sing no more now till I get a drink
I'm drunk today and I'm seldom sober
A handsome rover from town to town
Ah but I'm sick now my days are numbered
Come all you young men and lay me down

My childhood days bring back sad reflections
Of happy days so long ago
My boyhood friends and my own relations
Have all passed on like the melting snow
So I'll spend my days in endless roving,
Soft is the grass and my bed is free
Oh to be home now in Carrickfergus,
On the long road down on the salty sea
(Third verse is seldom sung)

Rising of the Moon

words by J.K. Casey, music Turlough O'Carolan

And come tell me Sean O'Farrell tell me why you hurry so
Husha buachail hush and listen and his cheeks were all a glow
I bare orders from the captain get you ready quick and soon
For the pikes must be together by the rising of the moon
By the rising of the moon, by the rising of the moon
For the pikes must be together by the rising of the moon

And come tell me Sean O'Farrell where the gath'rin is to be
At the old spot by the river quite well known to you and me
One more word for signal token whistle out the marchin' tune
With your pike upon your shoulder by the rising of the moon
By the rising of the moon, by the rising of the moon
With your pike upon your shoulder by the rising of the moon

Out from many a mud wall cabin eyes were watching through
the night
Many a manly heart was beating for the blessed warning light
Murmurs rang along the valleys to the banshees lonely croon
And a thousand pikes were flashing by the rising of the moon
By the rising of the moon, by the rising of the moon
And a thousand pikes were flashing by the rising of the moon

All along that singing river that black mass of men was seen
High above their shining weapons flew their own beloved green
Death to every foe and traitor! Whistle out the marching tune
And hurrah, me boys, for freedom, 'tis the rising of the moon
'Tis the rising of the moon, 'tis the rising of the moon
And hurrah, me boys, for freedom, 'tis the rising of the moon

Barnyards o' Delgaty

As I cam in tae Turra market,
Turra market for tae fee
It's I fell in wi' a wealthy fairmer,
The barnyards o' Delgaty

Chorus:
Lin-ten addie too rin addie,
lin-ten addie toorin ae
Lin-ten low rin, low rin, low rin,
the barnyards o' Delgaty

He promised me the ae best pair,
that was in a' the kintra roon
Fan I gae hame tae the Barnyards,
There was naething there but skin and bone

The auld black horse sat on his rump,
The auld white mare lay on her wime
For a' that I would hup and crack,
They wouldna rise at yokin' time

Fan I gang tae the kirk on Sunday,
Mony's the bonny lass I see
Sittin' by her faither's side,
An' winkin' ower the pews at me

Oh, I can drink and no be drunken,
An' I can fecht an' no be slain
An' I can lie wi' anither man lass,
An' aye be welcome tae my ain

My caun'le noo it is burnt oot,
It's lo we is fairly on the wane
Sae fare ye weel ye Barnyards,
Ye'll never me here again

I'm a Rover

Well the night be dark as dungeon
not a star to be seen above
I will be guided, without a stumble
To the arms o' me own true love

Chorus:

For, I'm a rover seldom sober
I'm a rover of high degree
An' when I'm drinkin', I'm always thinking
Of how to gain my loves company

I went to her bedroom window,
Came up gently upon a stone
I wrapped upon her bedroom window,
"My darling dear do you lie alone?"

She raised her head from off her pillow
With her arms up around her breasts,
Sayin', "Who's that outside my window
disturbing me at my long nights rest?"

"'Tis but me, my own true lover,
Open the door and let me in
For, I have come a long long journey,
And I'm drenched right to the skin."

She opened the door with the greatest pleasure!
She opened the door, and let me in!
We both seized hands and embraced each other
And till the morning we lay as one!

"But now, my love, I must go and leave you.
Although the mountains be high above
I will climb them for greater treasure,
for I've been with my only love!"

Mari's Wedding

Chorus:

Step we gaily, on we go heel for heel and toe for toe
Arm and arm and row and row all for Mari's wedding

Over hill ways up and down
Myrtle green and Bracken brown
Pass the shilling through the town
All for the sake of Mari

Plenty herring, plenty meal
Plenty fish to fill the creel
Plenty bonny bairns as weel
That's the toast of Mari

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

Over hill ways up and down
Myrtle green and Bracken brown
Pass the shilling through the town
All for the sake of Mari

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Johnny Cope

Cope sent a challenge from Dunbar saying
Charlie meet me an' ye daur
An' I'll learn ye the art o' war
if ye'll meet me in the morning

Chorus:

Hey Johnny Cope are ye walking yet or
are your drums a beating yet
If ye were walking I would wait
tae gang tae the coals in the morning

When Charlie looked his letter upon
he drew his sword the scabbard from
Come follow me my merry men
and we'll meet Johnny Cope in the morning

Now Johnny be as good as your word
come let us try baithe fire and sword
And dinna flee like a frichted bird
that's chased frae its nest i' the morning

When Johnny Cope he heard o' this
He thocht it wadna ba a miss
Tae hae a horse in readiness
Tae flee awa in the morning

Eye now Johnny get up a' rin
The Highland bagpipes mak' a din
Its better tae Sleep in a hale skin
for it gonna be a bloody morning

When Johnny Cope tae Dunbar cam'
the spiered at him 'where's a your men?'
The de'il confound me gin I ken
for I left them a' in the morning

Now Johnny troth ye werna blate
Tae come wi' news o' your ain defeat
And leave you men in sic a strait
Sae early in the morning

In faith quoth Johnny I got sic flags
Wi' their claymores an' philabegs
Gin I face them again de'il brak my legs
so I wish you a' good morning

New York Girls

As I walked down the Broadway one evening in July
I met a maid who asked me trade and a sailor John says I

Chorus: And away, you Santee, my dear Annie
Oh, you New York girls, can't you dance the polka

To Tiffany's I took her I did not mind the expense
I bought her two gold earrings and they cost me fifteen cents

Says she, 'You Limejuice sailor now take me home you may'
But when we reached the cottage door, these words to me did say

My flash man he's a Yankee with his hair cut short behind
He likes to wear long sea-boots and is bos'n in the Blackball Line

He's homeward bound this evening and with me he will stay
So get a move on, sailor-boy, get cracking on your way

So I kissed her hard and proper before her flash man came
Saying fare ye well, my Bowery girl, I know your little game

I wrapped my glad rags round me and to the docks did steer
I'll never court another maid I'll stick to rum and beer

I joined a Yankee blood-boat and sailed away next morn
Never fool around with girls you're safer round Cape Horn