

# '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 shortnin' 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 shortnin' 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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## Shortnenin' 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 shortnenin' 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-snорin' 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 bidin' 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 'till 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 'till 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 stead  
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 'till 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 silver 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 buachaill 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 stain  
An' I can lie wi' another 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 baithie 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

Fye 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