

Six Folksongs from Norfolk (1924)**[1] Down by the Riverside**

One morning in the month of June, down by the riverside,
There I beheld a bold fisherman come rowing by the tide.

(Refrain) Come rowing by the tide –
There I beheld a bold fisherman come rowing by the tide.

He lashed his boat up by the stern, and to his lady went.
He took her by the milk-white hand, for she was his intent.

(Refrain) For she was his intent –
He took her by the milk-white hand, for she was his intent.

'I'll take you to my father's hall, and there make you my bride.
Then you will have a bold fisherman to row you on the tide.'

(Refrain) To row you on the tide –
Then you will have a bold fisherman to row you on the tide.

[2] The Bold Richard

Come all my brisk young seaman lads that have a mind to enter
On board a famous frigate your precious lives to venture,
On board a famous frigate she's Richard called by name,
And she's cruising with the Shannon all on the French main.
Singing 'What Cheer O!'

Now we'd not been sailing many leagues before we did espy
Three lofty sails to windward, they came bearing down so nigh.
And two of them were merchantmen came bowling from the west,
But the convoy was a frigate that did sail out of Brest.
Singing 'What Cheer O!'

Now we bore down upon them with high and lofty sails;
For broadside for broadside we soon o'er them prevailed
When he lashed his helm o' weather, not thinking we could fly.
When they found their ship was sinking for quarter they did cry.
Singing 'What Cheer O!'

Now we launched out our longboats and the others did likewise,
To save all those prisoners that ever we came nigh.
And those which we saved, they vow and protest
We sunk the finest frigate that did sail out of Brest.
Singing 'What Cheer O!'

So come all my brisk young fellows now to Kingston we have got;
Let each of a hearty fellow drink out of a hearty pot,
For some unto their sweethearts and others to their wives.
So we'll sing Hallelujah to all England, my brave boys.
Singing 'What Cheer O!'

[3] Lonely Waters

As I walked out one bright May morning
For to view the fields and to take the air,
There I espied a fair young damsel,
She appeared to me like some angel bright.

I said 'My dear, where are you going,
What is the cause of all your grief?
I'll make you as happy as any lady,
If you'll once more grant me relief.'

'Stand off, stand off, you are deceitful,
Stand off you are a deceitful man.
'Tis you that have caused my poor heart to wander,
And to give me comfort is all in vain.'

Then I'll go down to some lonely waters,
Go down where no one they shall me find,
Where the pretty little small birds do change their voices,
And every moment blows blustering wild.

[4] The Pressgang

As I walked up of London street
A press-gang there I did meet:
They asked me if I'd join the fleet
And sail in a man-o'-war, boys.

Pray, brother shipmates, tell me true
What sort of usage they give you,
That I may know before I go
On board of a man-o'-war, boys.

Why the sort of usage they'll give you
Is plenty of grog and bacca too:
That's the usage they'll give you
On board of a man-o'-war, boys.

But when I went, to my surprise
All that they told me was shocking lies:
There was a row and a bloody old row,
On board of a man-o'-war, boys.

The first thing they did they took me in hand,
They flogged me with a tar of a strand:
They flogged me till I could not stand,
On board of a man-o'-war, boys.

Now I was married and my wife's name was Gray,
'Twas she that led me to shocking delay:
'Twas she that caused me to go away,
On board of a man-o'-war, boys.

So when I get my foot on shore,
Those Irish girls to see once more,
I'll never go to sea any more,
On board of a man-o'-war, boys.

[5] The Shooting of his Dear

O come all you young fellows that carry your gun,
I'd have you get home by the light of the sun:
For young Jimmy was a fowler, and a-fowling alone,
When he shot his own true love in the room of a swan.

Then home went young Jimmy with his dog and his gun,
Saying 'Uncle, dear uncle, have you heard what I've done?
Cursèd be that old gunsmith that made my old gun -
I have shot my own true love in the room of a swan.'

Then out came bold Uncle with his locks hanging grey,
Saying 'Jimmy, dear Jimmy, don't you go away:
Don't you leave your own country till your trial come on,
For you never will be hangèd for shooting a swan.'

So the trial came on and pretty Polly did appear,
Saying 'Uncle, dear uncle, let Jimmy go clear:
For my apron was bound round me and he took me for a swan.'
And his poor heart lay bleeding for Polly his own.

[6] The Oxford Sporting Blade

I am an Oxford sporting blade, likewise a gallant hero;
I've just come down from London town for to view the hills of Dear Oh.

http://www.naxos.com/catalogue/item.asp?item_code=8.571359

The very first man I chanced to meet he was a lord of honour;
I did insult this noble lord all in such roguish manner.

I drew my pistol to my breast and didn't I make him shiver;
Five hundred pounds all in bright gold to me he did deliver.

Beside the gold a Geneva watch to me he did surrender;
And I thought it was a splendid prize the very first time I did venture.

I took a handful of the same and I bought a slashing gelding;
And he could go and jump a five-barred gate and I bought him off Mister Sheldon.
So up to London I will go as fast as the wind can blow me:
I am resolved on liberty, there's none up there to control me.

[7] The North Sea Ground (C. Fox Smith)

Oh, Grimsby is a pleasant town as any man may find,
An' Grimsby wives are thrifty wives, an' Grimsby girls are kind,
An' Grimsby lads were never yet the lads to lag behind
When there's men's work doin' on the North Sea ground.

An' its 'Wake up, Johnnie!', for the high tide's flowin',
An' off the misty waters a cold wind blowin';
Skipper's come aboard and it's time that we were goin',
An' there's fine fish waitin' on the North Sea ground.

Soles in the Silver Pit – an' there we'll let 'em lie;
Cod on the Dogger – oh, we'll fetch 'em by-an'-by;
War on the water – an' it's time to serve an' die,
For there's wild work doin' on the North Sea ground.

An' it's 'Wake up, Johnnie!', they want you at the trawlin'
(With your long sea-boots and your tarry old tarpaulin);
All across the bitter seas duty comes a-callin'
In the winter's weather off the North Sea ground.

[It's well we've learned to laugh at fear – the sea has taught us how;
It's well we've shaken hands with death – we'll not be strangers now,
With death in every climbin' wave before the trawler's bow,
An' the black spawn swimmin' on the North Sea ground.]

Good luck to all our fightin' ships that rule the English sea;
Good luck to our brave merchantmen wherever they may be;
The sea it is their highway, an' we've got to sweep it free
For the ships passin' over on the North Sea ground.

An' it's 'Wake up, Johnnie!', for the sea wind's cryin';
Time an' time to go where the herrin' gulls are flyin';
An' down below the stormy seas the dead men lyin',
Oh, the dead lyin' quiet on the North Sea ground!

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[8] High Germany

On one day as I was walking by myself all alone,
I heard two young ones talking, they were talking all alone.
Said the young one to the fair one, 'Bonny lassie', said he,
'Our king he have commanded us, and his orders we must obey.'

'That's not what you promised me when you did me beguile:
You promised for to marry me as we walked many a mile.
Do not me forsake but pity on me take, great fear is my woe:
Through Scotland, France and Ireland, along with you I will go.'

'As long as we're travelling, that would hurt your tender feet:
Over hills and lofty mountains that would cause you for to weep.
Beside that you would not consent to laying in the fields all night long;
And your parents would be angry if along o'me you gang.

But since you are so vexillous as to risk your sweet life,
 So first I will marry you and make you my lawful wife;
 Then if anyone offend you I'll protect you, and that you shall see –
 I will take you where the drums and trumpets sound, in the wars of High Germany.'

[9] The Sailor and Young Nancy

It was happy and delightful one midsummer's morn,
 When the fields and the meadows they were covered in corn,
 And the blackbirds and thrushes sang on every green tree,
 And the larks they sang melodious at the dawn of the day.

(Refrain) And the larks they sang melodious,
 And the larks they sang melodious,
 And the larks they sang melodious,
 At the dawn of the day.

Said the sailor to his true love, 'I am bound far away –
 I am bound for the East Indies, I no longer can stay.
 I am bound for the East Indies where the loud cannons roar –
 I am going to leave my Nancy, she's the girl I adore.'

(Refrain) I am going to leave my Nancy,
 I am going to leave my Nancy,
 I am going to leave my Nancy,
 She's the girl I adore.

A ring from his finger he then instantly drew,
 Saying, 'Take this, dearest Nancy, and my heart shall go too.'
 And while he embraced her tears from her eyes fell,
 Saying, 'May I go along with you?' 'Oh no, my love, fare you well.'

(Refrain) Saying, 'May I go along with you?'
 Saying 'May I go along with you?'
 Saying 'May I go along with you?'
 'Oh no, my love, fare you well.'

Said the sailor to his true love, 'I no longer can stay,
 For our topsails are hoisted and our anchor is weighed.
 Our ship she lays awaiting for the next flowing tide,
 And if ever I return again I will make you my bride.'

(Refrain) 'And if ever I return again,
 And if ever I return again,
 And if ever I return again
 I will make you my bride.'

[10] The Little Milkmaid

A little maid, boys, a-milking she did go;
 A little maid, boys, a-milking she did go;
 When the wind it did blow high and the wind it did blow low,
 And it tossed this little maid through and through.

She went till she met with a man;
 She went till she met with a man;
 And she kindly asked him 'If you have any good skill,
 Will you catch me a small bird or two?'

'Yes, my love, I have a very good skill;
 Yes, my love, I have a very good skill;
 If you'll gain along with me to some shady green tree,
 I will catch you a small bird or two.'

So down in green meadows they went;
 So down in green meadows they went;
 And the nightingale was singing and the primroses springing,
 You'll know very well what it meant.

Here's luck to the blackbird and the thrush;
 And here's luck to the merry gay grooms;
 For they'll laugh and sing all day and at night they'll sport and play,
 And go home with the griefs in the morn.

[11] The Jolly Carter

I was out with my wagon one morning in spring;
 The trees was full leaf and the birds was full singing.

(Refrain) 'Well done Robin, drive on Robin;
 Drive along Robin, right-o and gee woa.'

All along down the lane then a maid I did spy;
 And the meadows awoke to the sound of my cry.

(Refrain)

So I hastened my horses to walk by her side;
 And I said to the damsel 'My dear, won't you ride?'

(Refrain)

I put my arm round her and I gave her a kiss;
 She said 'You can take me, young man, if you wish.'

(Refrain)

I spoke to my forehorse, he jingled his bell;
 That was his music, as no tongue can tell.

(Refrain)

She bet time to my music, the bells they did sound;
 'God bless you, my dear, how the wheels run around.'

(Refrain)

[12] Parson and Clerk

There's an old clerk in this parish I know very well;
 He often do toll the eight o'clock bell.
 He went to the alehouse and got a full pot –
 And forgot the old church for to lock-a-lock lock.
 Rilari-liddle la diddle, la diddle la diddle-i-day.

A mare and a foal they ran in great speed;
 The mare from the Bible began for to read.
 'Stay' said the foal. 'Before you begin –
 Whatever you pray for, I'll answer Amen.'
 Rilari-liddle la diddle, la diddle la diddle-i-day.

We'll pray for the millers who grind us our corn;
 For they are the biggest rogues that ever were born.
 Instead of one sackful they'll take two for toll –
 May the devil take millers! 'Amen' said the foal.
 Rilari-liddle la diddle, la diddle la diddle-i-day.

We'll pray for the tailors, for they are no men;
 They'll buy an old coat and they'll sell it again:
 They'll rub it and scrub it and darn up a hole –
 May the devil take tailors! 'Amen' said the foal.
 Rilari-liddle la diddle, la diddle la diddle-i-day.

We'll pray for the publicans who sell us our liquor;
 Small measure they like, they can fill us the quicker.
 If you ask them for old beer they'll draw you the small –
 May the devil take publicans! 'Amen' said the foal.
 Rilari-liddle la diddle, la diddle la diddle-i-day.

[13] Gaol Song

Step in young man, I know your face,
'Tis nothing in your favour.
A little time I'll give to you –
Six months unto hard labour.

(Refrain) To my hip fol the day, hip fol the dee;
To my hip fol the dol, fol the di-gee O.

At six o'clock our turnkey comes in,
With a bunch of keys all in his hand.

'Come come, my lads, step up and grind –
Tread the wheel till breakfast time.'

(Refrain)

At eight o'clock our skilly comes in,
Sometimes thick and sometimes thin.
But the devil of a word we must not say –
It's bread and water all next day.

(Refrain)

At half-past eight the bell doth ring,
Unto the chapel we must swing.
Onto our bended knees must fall –
Lord have mercy on us all.

(Refrain)

At nine o'clock our bell doth ring,
All on the trap, boys, we must swing.
'Come pray, my lads, to be in time –
The wheel to tread and the corn to grind.

(Refrain)

Now Saturday is come, I am sorry to say,
Sunday is our starvation day.
Our jackboots and our goglets too –
They are not ready nor they will not do.

(Refrain)

Now six long months are over and past,
I'll return to my bonny, bonny lass.
I'll leave the turnkeys all behind –
The wheel to tread and the corn to grind.

(Refrain)

Six Suffolk Folksongs

[14] Nutting Time

Come all you single fellows, would you like to hear a song? –
If you'll listen to my ditty I won't detain you long.
It is of a fair young maiden lived in a town of Kent:
She arose one summer's morning and she a-nutting went.

(Refrain) O, a-nutting she did go my boys, a-nutting she did go;
With a blue cockade all in her hat she caused a gallant show.

There was a brisk young farmer a-ploughing up his land –
He called out to his horses and kindly bid them stand.
He set himself down on his plough a song unto begin:
His voice was so melodious it made the tenors ring.

(Refrain)

It was this same young damsel was a-nutting in the wood –
And the song was so melodious it charmed her as she stood.
She had no longer power in the lonesome wood to stay:
So what few nuts that poor girl got she threw them all away.

(Refrain)

She went to this young farmer as he sat on his plough –
She said to him, 'My Johnny dear, I feel I don't know how.'
He said, 'My pretty fair maid, I'm glad to see you here:
Do you set yourself by the side of me and I'll keep you from all fear.'

(Refrain)

Young Johnny he turned back again and finished up his song –
He said, 'My pretty fair maid, won't your mother think you long?'
She threw her arms around him as she tripped along the plain:
'I should like to see the world, my dear, go round and round again.'

(Refrain)

[15] Blackberry Fold

The squire and his sister were a-sitting in the hall;
A-singing together they heard someone call.
As they were a-singing their morning song,
Pretty Betsy the milkmaid came tripping along.

'Do you want any milk, sir?', pretty Betsy she cried.
'O yes', said the squire, 'walk in, pretty maid.
O you are the fair creature that I do adore –
So be my true lover as never before.'

'O, hold your tongue, squire, and let me go free;
Don't make such a game of my poverty.
There's ladies of honour more fitting for you
Than I, a poor milkmaid brought up to my cow.'

Then a ring from his finger he instantly drew;
And right in the middle he broke it in two.
One part he gave to her, as I have been told –
And they both walked together in Blackberry Fold.

Then the parson was sent for, the couple to wed;
That they might enjoy their sweet marriage bed.
He made her a lady, and his wife to adore –
He married that damsel although she was poor.

[16] Cupid's Garden

It's down in Cupid's Garden for pleasure I did go,
All for to view the flowers,
All for to view the flowers that in the garden grow.

The first it was the jasmine, the lily, pink and rose:
These are the finest flowers,
These are the finest flowers that in the garden grow.

I hadn't been in the garden not passing half an hour,
Before I saw two maidens,
Before I saw two maidens sitting in a pleasant bower.

The one was lovely Nancy, so beautiful and fair,
And the other was a maiden,
And the other was a maiden that did the laurel wear.

I boldly stepped up to her, these words to her did say:
'Are you engaged to any young man,

Are you engaged to any young man, come tell to me I pray'.

'I'm not engaged to any young man', she solemnly declared;
'I mean to be a maiden,
I mean to be a maiden, and still the laurel wear.'

'It's down in Portsmouth harbour, my ship is waiting there;
And I must go to sea, my dear,
And I must go to sea, my dear, when the wind it doth blow fair.

And if ever I do return again, married to you I'll be;
I'll make myself contented,
I'll make myself contented and go no more to sea.'

[17] Father and Daughter

Said the father to his daughter: 'What makes you so lament?
Ain't there no young man in all this world that can't your heart content?
That can't your heart content?
Ain't there no young man in all this world that can't your heart content?'

Said the daughter to her father: 'I'll tell you the reason why:
You sent that young man a-crossing the sea, that would me satisfy.
That would me satisfy.
You sent that young man a-crossing the sea, that would me satisfy.'

Said the father to his daughter: 'Five hundred pounds I'll give,
If you'll forsake that sailor boy and come back with me to live.
And come back with me to live.
If you'll forsake that sailor boy and come back with me to live.'

For nine long months she watched the sea, and three long lingering days,
When she saw a ship come rolling in with her true love on the stays.
With her true love on the stays.
When she saw a ship come rolling in with her true love on the stays.

She said: 'Yonder set my angel, a-watching there for me:
Tomorrow to the church we'll go and married we will be.
Tomorrow to the church we'll go,
Tomorrow to the church we'll go and married we will be.

And I'm happy in my mind –
For I'll soon be married to the man I love,
And I'm happy in my mind.'

[18] The Isle of Cloy

It's of a lady in the Isle of Cloy,
She fell in love with her serving boy.
Soon as her parents came to hear,
They separated her from her dear.

So to disgrace her whole family,
They sent this young man across the sea
On board the Tiger, a man o'war,
To act his part like some gallant tar.

This young man hadn't long been upon the main
Before a cruel fight began.
It was his sad luck to fall –
He got struck dead by a cannon ball.

The very same night this young man was slain,
Close to her father's bedside she came.
With heavy sighs and bitter groans,
Close to her father's bed she stole.

As she stood weeping, scarce could refrain,
The tears rolled down from her eyes like rain.
All weeping sore for her own true love,

She hanged herself from the beam above.

The squire's servants they stood around –
They viewed this lady and cut her down;
And in her bosom a note unsealed:
A girl of sorrow it revealed.

'My father is one of the best of men,
But he's drove me to this disgraceful end.
And of this vain world pray a warning take:
I died a maid for my true love's sake.'

[19] A Seaman's Life

Oh a seaman's life is a merry, merry life –
They'll rob young girls of their heart's delight;
They will leave them behind for to sail one morn,
But they never know when they will return.

There's four-and-twenty sailor boys all in a row –
My sweet William is the bridegroom's show;
For he is handsome and he is small:
If I can't have him I'll have none at all.

Oh a seaman's life is a merry, merry life –
They'll rob young girls of their heart's delight;
They will leave them behind for to sail one morn,
But they never know when they will return.

Songs from County Kerry

[20] The Dawning of the Day

In winter's gloom and dreary blast I must retract my flight,
Through mountain roads, through snow and frost, all alone in the dark of night.
Thought or news, no time to lose, I cannot long delay –
I must be there each morning fair, by the dawning of the day.

In drearer hours than e'er have passed I must have tramped my way,
Where the screaming owl and the scampering fox stray lurking for their prey.
More lonely than the wild wood lark that in the forest stray,
I must be there each morning fair, by the dawning of the day.

How low diffused in morning dew spreads o'er each silent lawn,
Birds in trees by the murmuring breeze aroused by morning's dawn.
The rising sun through the winding groves sends forth his beams of light,
Through shady bowers to awake the flowers that slumber there all night.

Oh sweet Dereen, oh lovely vale, oh noblest seat on earth,
Green be thy fields and the sparkling flowers and the vale that gave thee birth.
The silvery streams from the mountains glide to meet the briny sea –
'Twould cheer your heart when night depart by the dawning of the day.

[21] My Love Passed Me By

When going to Mass last Sunday, my true love passed me by;
I knew her love were altered by the roll she gave her eye.
Yes, I knew her mind was altered to some lad of high degree –
O charming, lovely Molly, your looks have wounded me.

Whenever you meet a pretty girl with that dark and roguish eye,
Just kiss her and embrace her, and tell her the reason why.
Yes, kiss her and embrace her and steal her heart away –
For a cowardly-hearted soldier, he never gained the day.

It's down in yonder valley I'll meet my love bye and bye;
And it's down in yonder valley I'll gaze into her eye.
And it's down in yonder valley I'll meet my love tonight –
Sure I'll hold her in my arms, to the course of my heart's delight.

[22] The Murder of Father Hanratty

You feeling-hearted Christians I hope you will draw near,
Till I sing for you a verse or two which will cause your hearts to tear;
Concerning our dear clergyman, whose loss we do deplore,
By heretics was murdered not far from Dromore.

When they got him on the road, and far away from home,
Those cruel-hearted villains our priest they did surround;
Alas they took him treacherous, gave him no time to pray,
And with a billhook sharp and keen they took his life away.

And when they did him murder, to crown that awful sin,
It was to a limestone quarry they threw his body in.
For fear of being arrested those villains made away,
But the Lord will hold them guilty in the great accounting day.

It was early next morning, two men were passing by;
The blood being sprinkled on the road they happened for to spy.
They traced it to the quarry where they did him behold;
And the body of His Reverence was lying stiff and cold.

And to the chapel he was brought, High Mass for him was said;
Upon his breast was laid the cross and the chalice at his head.
The altar it was draped in black, his loss for to deplore –
May the Lord have mercy on his soul, we'll never see him more.

To see his grand procession your heart would give a sigh;
To hear his tender parents for him did loudly cry.
The widows and the orphans with dismal hearts did say:
May the Lord have mercy on the soul of Father Hanratty.

[23] The Roving Dingle Boy

From the Dingle bay he sailed away all in the month of May –
His true love she stood weeping while waiting on the quay.
His true love she stood weeping, so bitterly she cried,
Saying 'He's gone and God be with him, he's my roving Dingle boy.'

Then the sails were hoist and the flag was flown, and the ship began to move.
Just as the anchorage was cleared, she cried these words I'll prove:
'A maid, a maid I'll always stay until the day I die,
For there is no other one for me but my roving Dingle boy.'

Now he'd gone away past six months clear when a letter he sent home,
Enquiring all about his friends and the girl he left alone.
He sent her home her passage paid to comfort all her joy,
And she's now in Philadelphia with her roving Dingle boy.

Come all you maids and maidens fair, a warning take by me:
Never slight your own true love while he is on the sea.
Be sure to him, prove constant, and he's bound to crown your joy,
And carry you towards the city like my roving Dingle boy.

[24] The Lost Lover

The summer is coming and the grass is green,
And the leaves are budding on every tree;
The ships are sailing upon the sea,
And I'll soon have tidings of my own Johnneen.

The night was stormy and dark and cold,
When I lost my darling, my true love bold;
I'll range the valleys and the mountains high,
And I'll never marry until I die.

O Johnny, Johnny I love you well,
I love you better than tongue can tell;
I love my friends and relations too,
But I'd leave them all, love, and go with you.

[25] The Tinker's Daughter

If you're a tinker's daughter as I took you for to be,
Will you ride up to Kilgarvan, making buckets there for me?

(Refrain) With my gumshilla an' a goushilla an' me gashilla like a Leary-O,
With my goushilla an' me gumshilla, wallop it out my hero.

Before we went to Kenmare we hadn't this nor that;
But now the fair is over we've a piebald and a flat.

(Refrain)

I soldered in the stable and I soldered in the hall;
The children in the kitchen threw away my tools and all.

(Refrain)

Sure I can make a bucket or I can make a pint;
I can do a job of tinker's work the darkest hours of night.

(Refrain)

I'll pull out my pony and I'll try to make a swap;
I'll catch a tinker's daughter and I'll catch her on the hop.

(Refrain)

[26] Kitty, I am in Love with You

(Refrain) Kitty I am in love with you, Kitty I am ashore;
Kitty I am in love with you whether you like it or no.

I was on top of Mount Brandon, and she in the valley below;
I took off my shoes and my stockings, to follow my Kitty-eye-O.

(Refrain)

I have a foot for a stocking, and I have a leg for a shoe;
I have a kiss for the ladies, and maybe some other thing too.

(Refrain)

I have a pan and a keeler, and a churn as white as the snow;
O Kitty my dear, will you marry me; love, with your dove will you go?

(Refrain)