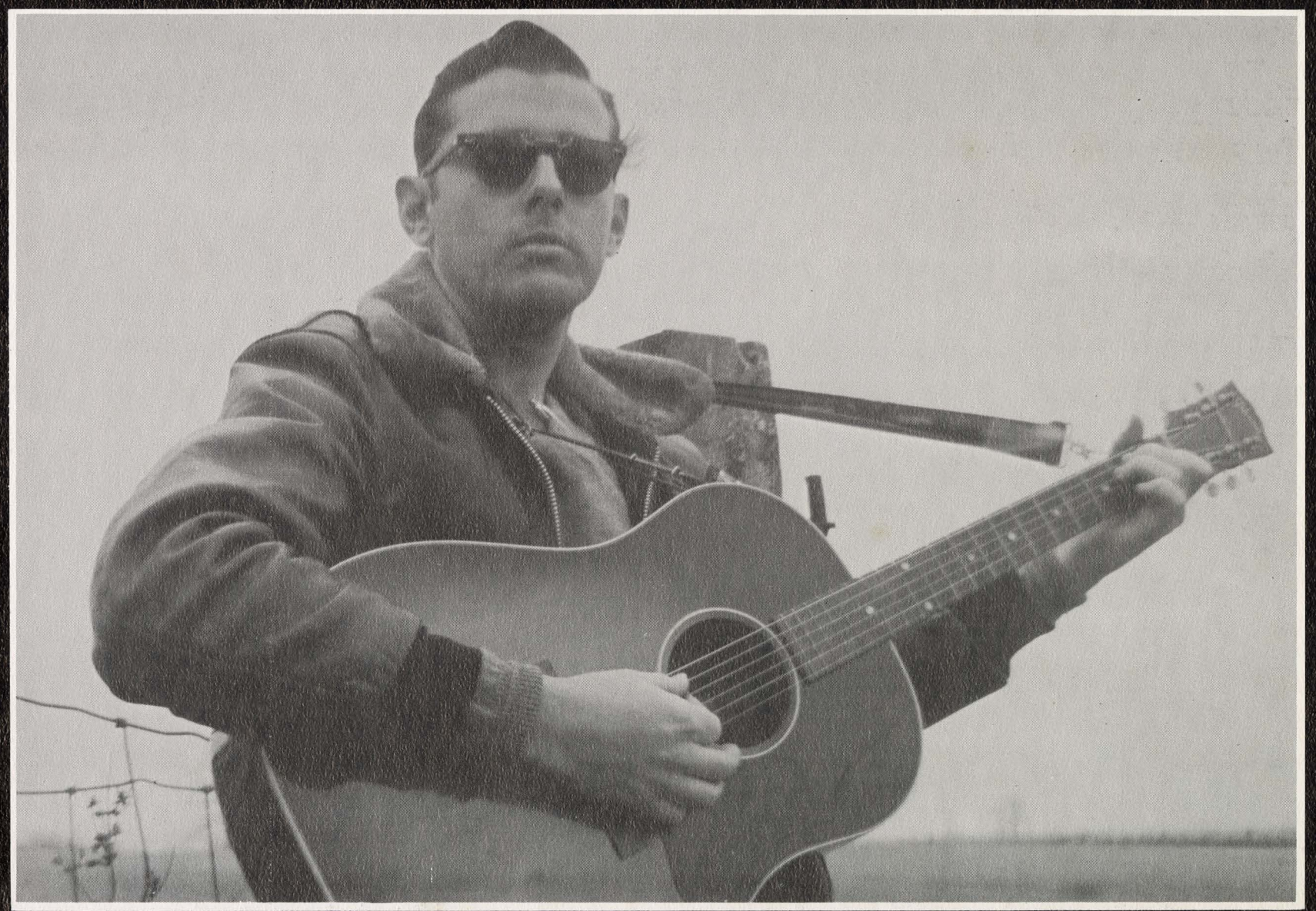
FSA-18

*"Take the News to Mother"*
*and other songs of a more sentimental age.*

# ARNOLD KEITH STORM of Mooresville, Indiana



FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS, INC. HUNTINGTON, VERMONT

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*"Take the News to Mother"*

# ARNOLD KEITH STORM of Mooresville, Indiana

*Recorded by Pat Dunford*
*Notes by Pat Dunford and Sandy Paton*

Arnold Keith Storm is one of the finest young folksingers I have ever heard. His voice is vibrant and exciting; his guitar and harmonica accompaniments are rich, skillful, and completely appropriate to his material. His approach to the songs here recorded is one of sincerity and respect. As a result, songs which, performed by a lesser artist, would appear mawkish and maudlin become genuinely moving and believable. Keith grew up with these songs; they are an integral part of his life. The majority of them were learned from his father during his childhood in rural Illinois. Although Keith now works as a postal clerk in Indianapolis, his ties to his rural upbringing are strong. This is a fortunate fact, for without those ties it is unlikely that Keith could perform these songs as convincingly as he does.

Most of the songs on this album have lately "been under the cloud that inevitably obscures the heroes of an age just passed." On those rare occasions when, in recent years, they have been taken out, dusted off, and performed, the aim has generally been to transmogrify their sentiment with sophisticated contempt, to hold them up to ridicule and, with them, the entire era they represent. It is easy, however, to make mock of melodrama; it is far more difficult to approach it with a sympathetic understanding of the genuine emotions that underlie its formal conventions. "To appreciate the art of another period one must, to a certain extent, enter into its spirit, accept its conventions, adopt 'a willing suspension of disbelief' in its values." The difficulty lies in the fact that "by some mysterious law of human taste it is almost impossible to enter into the spirit of the age that comes just before one's own."* That Keith Storm makes such a transition possible, indeed effortless, for us attests to his genius.

Folksong collectors, seeking material of an earlier vintage, have usually elected to ignore the existence of these songs in the repertoires of their informants, but rare is the ballad singer who does not know at least a few of them and want to include them along with their older, though no less sentimental, broadside brethren. Such selectivity on the part of the collector has tended to distort the average person's concept of the contemporary folk aesthetic, of the various types of song that thrive concurrently in the affections of our traditional singers. The fact that this album is devoted almost entirely to the sentimental songs of Victorian America is a deliberate attempt to restore to a proper perspective our view of this country's popular culture, not only as it was a generation ago, but as it is today among large segments of our population.

*Sandy Paton*

* The quotations are from David Cecil's *Early Victorian Novelists*, Penguin Books, Ltd., 1948.

## Side 1:

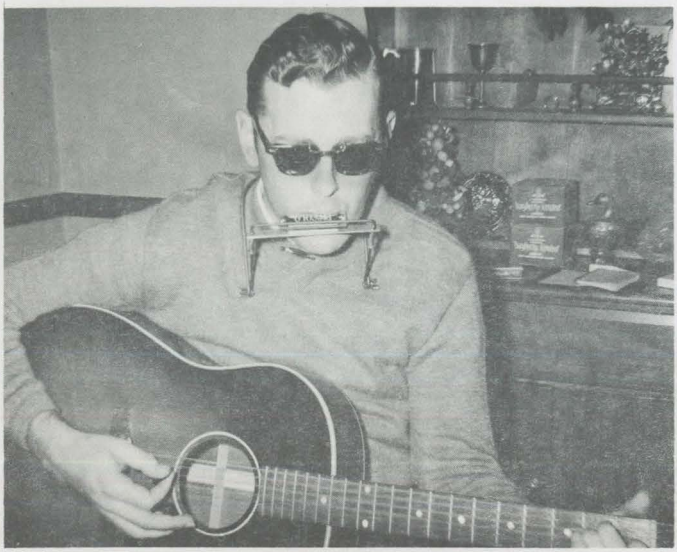
THE BOY WHO COULD NEVER COME HOME
THE DREAM OF THE MINER'S CHILD
THE PRISON WARDEN'S SECRET
TAKE THE NEWS TO MOTHER
TWO DRUMMERS
LITTLE ROSEWOOD CASKET
LITTLE JOE, THE WRANGLER
UTAH CARL

## Side 2:

THERE'S A MOTHER ALWAYS WAITING YOU AT HOME
THE BLIND CHILD
POOR LITTLE JOE
PATCHED UP OLD DEVIL
JIM BLAKE, YOUR WIFE IS DYING
THE GREAT EXPLOSION (STORM)
THE SPARROW'S QUESTION (STORM)
NINETY AND NINE

*"Take the News to Mother"*

# ARNOLD KEITH STORM



**Recorded by Pat Dunford**
**Notes by Pat Dunford**
**and Sandy Paton**

**FSA-18**



**FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS, INC.**
**SHARON, CONNECTICUT**

"Take the News to Mother"

# ARNOLD KEITH STORM



Recorded by Pat Dunford
Notes by Pat Dunford
and Sonny Paton

FSA-13

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SHARON, CONNECTICUT

ARNOLD KEITH STORM

One morning in July of 1963, I received a telephone call from a man who had read a recent article in The Indianapolis Times about my experiences collecting folk music in the field. He told me that he, too, was interested in traditional folk music and thought, perhaps, that we could get together. He went on to say that he played the guitar, harmonica and fiddle and had recently learned to play the five-string banjo from Pete Seeger's instruction manual. I figured that the man had, like myself, merely picked up songs from records and books and had become interested in folk music through the urban folk-song revival. This was my first contact with Arnold Keith Storm.

About a week later, Keith, as I learned was the name he preferred to use, came over to my house. After talking for quite awhile about folk music in general, I asked Keith to sing a song. The first song he sang was "The Last Fierce Charge", an old Civil War ballad which he told me he had learned from his father. I was amazed, to say the least. Keith's soft, mellow voice, smooth, flat-pick guitar style, and the beautiful Civil War song fused together to make a perfect combination. After talking with him further, I found that there was definitely a great collection of traditional songs in the Storm family and that Keith had remembered a large number of them.

Arnold Keith Storm, one of three children, was born in 1936 at Decatur, Illinois. His father, Arthur Leon Storm, was a combination grocery store keeper and farmer who raised most of the food which the Storm family ate. When Keith was three, the family moved to Brownstown, Illinois, where he attended both elementary and high schools. Keith can never remember a time when there wasn't "some sort of musical instrument lying around the house". His father played the fiddle, guitar and harmonica and sang many old songs. He played for square dances and for other social gatherings in the area around Brownstown and sang quite a lot around home for friends, neighbors, etc. Keith was about eight years old when he first began playing the harmonica and later picked up the guitar and fiddle, learning to play all the instruments from watching his father. When he became good enough, Keith began playing with his father and the other members of the family who were musicians. During his high school years, Keith sang in a Gospel quartet which toured the Brownstown area and performed at church meetings, revivals, etc.

After graduating from high school, Keith enlisted in the Air Force and, although he was stationed in Germany, he saw nearly all of Europe. He was married in London, England, in 1957, and lived for two years in Germany before returning to the United States in 1959. Keith and his wife, Joyce, and

their two children now live in Mooresville, Indiana, about twenty miles from Indianapolis. He is presently employed as a mail-sorter at the Post Office in Indianapolis.

Keith learned most of his songs from his father, who, in turn, learned a number of them from his father, Keith's grandfather, Samuel Burton Storm, who was originally from Kansas. This may account for the western songs in his repertoire, such as "Little Joe, the Wrangler" and "Utah Carl" (Side I; Bands 7 and 8). Keith's father learned the rest of his songs from various people in the Illinois area where he has always lived, merely picking up a song here and there.

Keith is a prime example of the traditional singer who has moved from the country to the city but still sings the songs that were so much a part of his daily life in younger years. The urban folksong influence has, by no means, left Keith untouched. He buys folksong books and magazines and has purchased a number of commercial recordings of folk music, not only strictly traditional, but bluegrass and more commercial types as well. Keith and I play together quite a bit, now, and have performed for a number of folksings in Indianapolis. Although we do a lot of material which Keith has learned from commercial records, the old songs he learned as a boy still seem to be "closer to heart", so to speak, than any others.

As a person, Keith remains of a country sort, being very quiet and soft-spoken with a slight country accent. He and his family live in a new housing development, but Keith still loves the country, the outdoors, and all the things that go with country living. Knowing Keith has been a rewarding experience for me, not only because of his music, but simply because Keith is the fine, gentle person that he is.

Arnold Keith Storm is an artist of amazing virtuosity and ability. His talent as a song writer is well demonstrated in the two songs of his own composition which are included on this album ("The Great Explosion" and "The Sparrow's Question"; Side II, Bands 6 and 7). The "Songs of a More Sentimental Age" on the record are sung by Keith with a definite deep feeling. They are representative of the sincere emotions, not only of the Storm family, but of many families across America some thirty to fifty years ago.

Pat Dunford
Indianapolis, Indiana
April, 1964

## ABOUT THE COLLECTOR

I'm always loathe to saddle anyone with the appellation "precocious", but I spoke with Pat Dunford on the telephone the other day and found he was rejoicing. It seems that, at last, after nearly three years of serious field collecting, he was finally going to be able to go to where the singers are without having to wait until he could hitch a ride with someone. Pat Dunford had just celebrated his sixteenth birthday and had obtained a driver's license. That's right; Pat began collecting folksongs when he was thirteen years old. Armed with a tape recorder and a copy of Brewster's Ballads and Songs of Indiana, Pat had begun a systematic search for the singers and/or their relatives who had contributed to that collection. Along the way, of course, Pat located new informants and new material. A nephew of W. Amos Abrams, folklore scholar and contributor to the Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore, Pat has also collected in North Carolina during several summers spent in that state. He plans to continue his folklore studies when he enters college. Would that we had more young men like him.

## THE SONGS

Since the majority of the songs on this record are not traditional folksongs, but, rather, songs which have been adopted by the folk and altered, to a greater or lesser degree, in the process of being assimilated into the repertoires of traditional singers, the standard reference works and collections are of little value to the researcher. Vance Randolph has accepted the fondness of the folk for these products of "Tin Pan Alley" and has included more of them than most collectors in his splendid Ozark Folksongs. The editors of the immense Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore have also permitted a few of these songs to slip into print in North Carolina Folklore. Sigmund Spaeth's Read 'Em and Weep and Weep Some More, My Lady are, of course, entirely devoted to surveying the genre. Aside from these works, there are few books in the Folk-Legacy library which can offer us information regarding the origins of the present songs. If it were possible to search through the popular music collection at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, it is likely that we could produce the originals of the present songs, but we are too far from Providence and, besides, it really doesn't make that much difference. Collectors of early recordings could probably supply us with much missing data for this booklet, but we have decided that it would be silly to hold up the release of this record in order to catalog a lot of unavailable records for the discophiles. We will, therefore, simply supply you with what information we have at hand and let the discographers do their own digging. The fact that Keith Storm learned all of the songs on the present record* from his family should suffice to establish that the songs

have already passed at least the first test in the purist's definition of folksong — that of oral transmission. To ignore the existence of these songs in the folk repertoire is to falsify the record and distort the concept of the folk aesthetic through the application of a somewhat snobbish selectivity based upon an alien value judgment. That the folk know and love these songs is a simple and incontrovertible fact. Let's face it — and enjoy it.

(*With the exception of the two original songs, of course.)

Side I; Band 1. THE BOY WHO COULD NEVER COME HOME

Keith learned this story of the prodigal son from the singing of his father. We have been unable to locate it in any of the standard reference works, although it is typical of the turn-of-the-century sentimental songs. Philip Wylie must have had in mind the social attitudes that produced the many songs of this type when he coined his now-famous term, "Momism".

As I'm riding along on this freight train,
My dear mother's voice I can hear;
She's crying, "Oh, Son, do not leave me,
It's more than my poor heart can bear."

Oh, boys, here'a a wanderer's warning:
Don't break your poor mother's heart;
Stay by her side when she needs you
And let nothing tear you apart.

I know she'll be waiting by the window
Day after day as I roam,
Watching and a-waiting and a-praying
For her boy who can never come home.

I'm riding along on this freight train,
Bound for God only knows where;
I hear Mother's voice, she is crying,
And my heart it is heavy with care.

I quarreled with my own father
Because of the things I had done;
He called me a drunkard and a gambler
And not fit to be his son.

I cursed and I swore at my father
And I told him his words were all lies;
I packed up my things in a bundle
And I went to tell Mother goodbye.

My poor mother broke down a-crying.
"My son, oh, my son, do not leave;
Your poor mother's heart will be broken
And all my life long I will grieve."

Oh, boys, here's a wanderer's warning:
Don't break your poor mother's heart;
Stay by her side when she needs you
And let nothing tear you apart.

Side I; Band 2. THE DREAM OF THE MINER'S CHILD

Sigmund Spaeth prints a slightly shortened version of this song in Weep Some More, My Lady (pp. 141-2), referring to it as "one of the favourites of the mountaineers", a fact borne out by the fact that Randolph found it in the Ozarks and Ethel Park Richardson included it in her American Mountain Songs. The Randolph and Richardson texts are nearly identical to that sung by Keith, the only differences being a few minor word changes. Not one of the three offer anything regarding the origin of the song or the name of the composer, however. Spaeth and Richardson both complain that we are not told the end of the story — namely, whether or not the child's dream proved true.

A miner was leaving his home for his work;
He heard his little child scream.
He went to the side of the little girl's bed.
"Oh, Daddy, I've had such a dream.

"Oh, Daddy, don't work in the mines today,
For dreams have so often come true;
Oh, Daddy, my Daddy, please don't go away,
I never could live without you.

"I dreamed that the mines were all seething with fire;
The men all fought for their lives.
Just then the scene changed and the mouth of the mines
Was all covered with sweethearts and wives.

"Oh, Daddy, don't work in the mines today,
For dreams have so often come true;
Oh, Daddy, my Daddy, please don't go away,
I never could live without you."

Her daddy then, smiling and stroking her face,
Was pulling away from her side,
But throwing her small arms around daddy's neck,
She gave him a kiss and then cried:

"Oh, Daddy, don't work in the mines today,
For dreams have so often come true;
Oh, Daddy, my Daddy, please don't go away,
I never could live without you.

"Go down to the village and tell all your friends,
As sure as the bright stars do shine,
There's something that's going to happen today;
Oh, Daddy, don't go to the mines.

"Oh, Daddy, don't work in the mines today,
For dreams have so often come true;
Oh, Daddy, my Daddy, please don't go away,
I never could live without you."

Side I; Band 3. THE PRISON WARDEN'S SECRET

Keith generally explains that his father always introduced this song by pointing out that the judge was actually the father of the boy he sentenced to hang, but that it had been so many years since he had seen his son that he failed to recognize him. The way I heard it from another singer, it was the warden who was the boy's father and the two were conspiring to keep the truth from the rest of the family. Either way, the introduction serves to heighten the drama, adding a touch of irony not found in the actual text of the song. Since Folk-Legacy has found the song in the repertoires of two New York State singers since first hearing it from Keith, we must assume that it had wide popularity among the folk, at least in the northern states, about thirty years ago. This leads us to suspect that a discographer could quickly produce the probable source. It doesn't appear in the standard collections.

A young man ran away from home
Not many years ago;
He left the straight and narrow road
With men he did not know.
They soon led the lad astray
With promises of gold,
And soon the poor boy was in jail
In the death-cell dark and cold.

"I did not mean to kill him, Judge,"
The sad young man then cried.
"I did not mean to kill him, Judge;
I'm sorry that he died.
My name I will not give you, Judge;
I hate to tell a lie.
I have the warden's promise
Not to tell it when I die.

"I have a dear old mother
And darling sister, too.
They think I'm living honestly;
They must not know the truth.
Oh, please, Your Honor, let me die;
I've made my peace with God.
Let the warden keep his promise
While I'm sleeping 'neath the sod."

"I sentence you to hang, my boy,"
The judge said with a sigh,
"But I must know your name, young man,
Because you have to die."
"I've told it to the warden, Judge,"
The sad young man then cried;
"He promised that he'd never tell
My name until he died."

The prison warden's secret
Was hidden in his heart.
He promised that he'd never tell;
Not a word would he impart.
It would kill a dear old father
Who could never bear the shame,
So the warden kept his promise
Not to tell the convict's name.

Side I; Band 4. TAKE THE NEWS TO MOTHER

Charles K. Harris wrote this song in 1897, according to Spaeth in Read 'Em and Weep, deriving his inspiration from a line spoken by a wounded drummer-boy in "Secret Service", a play about the Civil War. The original title was "Break the News to Mother" and the boys were fighting, not "in France", but "in blue". Obviously, the song was completely rewritten for patriotic service in World War I, for the text is radically different here from the "authentic version" published by Spaeth. Harris was probably the most successful song writer of his day; he was responsible for "After the Ball", "Hello, Central, Give Me Heaven", and many others. A comparison of the text sung here with that published in Spaeth's book will show how completely a song can change as the times demand. One must almost consider them two entirely separate songs with but a few words in common. We have failed to find the song elsewhere in print, although Mrs. Sarah Cleveland, a traditional singer from New York State has a version more closely resembling the original than the one sung here.

While the shot and shells were scattering
All over the battlefield,
While the boys in France were fighting
To save a noble flag.

Save that flag or give a life
For father, country and home.
They brought him back and I heard him say,
"I can no longer stay.

"Go and take the news to Mother,
For she knows how well I love her.
Kiss her dear, sweet lips just for me;
Tell her I'm not coming home.

"Go tell my darling sweetheart
Her lips I'll kiss no more,
For this battlefield is awful
And I'm sure I'll see her no more.

"Now, I'd love to see my mother
Kneel beside the old hearthstone,
But I'm in this hell right here on earth
And her prayers I'll here no more.

"Go and take the news to Mother;
Yes, she knows how well I love her.
Kiss her dear, sweet lips just for me
And take the news to all."

Side I; Band 5. TWO DRUMMERS (MY MOTHER WAS A LADY)

Keith Storm is the only person I have ever heard who can sing this without getting his tongue caught in his cheek. According to Spaeth (Read 'Em and Weep, p. 170), Ed Marks, who wrote the lyrics in 1896, might not have taken it too seriously himself. Here is the story of the song's origin, as told by Spaeth:

"It originated in a little German restaurant on Twenty-first Street, New York, where the singers, actors, and music publishers of the day often met for luncheon. A new waitress appeared there one day, a buxom, rosy-cheeked Lancashire girl, who immediately became the object of the regular customers' wit. Suddenly she burst into tears, crying out that nobody would dare insult her if her brother Jack were only there, and adding defiantly, 'My mother was a lady.' Meyer Cohen, one of the popular song-pluggers, immediately saw the possibilities of the line and prevailed upon Marks to write the lyric on the spot."

The music was composed by Joe Stern, "using the current trick of a verse in four-four time, followed by a conventional waltz chorus. (It) is also obviously a 'slide song', with each stilted line perfectly fitted to screen projection." The lines may be stilted and the composers may have written it with tongue in cheek, but, in the popular mind, "drummers" are invariably wiseacres and the poor girl's indignation was

undoubtedly considered completely righteous. Certainly the song has remained a great favorite for nearly seventy years, although, in Keith's singing, at least, it has lost the device of alternating time between verse and chorus.

Two drummer boys sat dining
In a grand hotel one day;
While dining they were chatting
In a jolly sort of way.
Up stepped a pretty waitress
To bring a tray of food.
They spoke to her familiarly,
In a manner rather rude.

At first, she did not notice
Or make the least reply,
But then it was one chance remark
Brought teardrops to her eyes.
She turned on her tormentors,
Her cheeks were burning red;
Approaching like a picture then,
And this is what she said:

"My mother is a lady,
And yours, you will allow,
And you may have a sister
Who needs protection now.
I came to this fair city
To find a brother dear
And you wouldn't dare insult me now,
If brother Jack were here."

The drummers sat in silence,
Their heads hung down in shame.
"Forgive us, Miss, we meant no harm;
Pray tell us, what's your name?"
She told them and they cried aloud,
"We know your brother well.
Why, we've known him for many, many years
And he often speaks of you.

"And if you'll come go back with me,
And if you'll only wed,
I'll take you to him as my bride,
For I love you since you said:

"My mother is a lady,
And yours, you will allow,
And you may have a sister
Who needs protection now.
I came to this fair city
To find a brother dear
And you wouldn't dare insult me now,
If brother Jack were here."

Side I; Band 6. LITTLE ROSEWOOD CASKET

Of all the sentimental songs in the American folk repertoire, this one takes top honors for national popularity. It appears in nearly every collection and would probably be found in all of them, had the editors of those excluding it not succumbed to sophisticated selectivity. Richardson includes it, with an apologetic note that it is there "at the request of a number of mountain singers, with whom it is a favorite." Neither Belden nor Randolph, both of whom have accepted its place in popular tradition, could identify the author, but Belden reports receiving a stall sheet of the song marked "Copyright 1870, by White and Goullaud". Brown notes that there are twenty-four versions in the North Carolina collection and observes that "it has become traditional in the South and Midwest; not, so far as is known, in New England." This merely demonstrates that the editors of New England collections deliberately excluded it because of its obvious literary origin; the song is well known in northern states where we have collected: Vermont and New York. The text sung by Keith is not as coherent as some, but the style in which he sings it is fully capable of glossing over such minor defects.

There's a little rosewood casket
That is lying on a stand;
There's a package of old letters
Written by my true love's hand.

Go and bring them to me, brother;
Come and sit upon my bed.
Lay your head upon my pillow
While my aching heart goes dead.

Read them gently to me, brother;
Read them till I fall asleep,
Fall asleep to wake in Heaven.
Oh, my brother, do not weep.

Last Sunday I saw him walking
With a lady by his side,
And I thought I heard him tell her
She could never be his bride.

When I hear them, in my coffin,
And my friends are gathered 'round,
And my dear old friends are ready
In some lonesome churchyard ground.

There's a little rosewood casket
Lying on a marble stand;
There's a package of old letters
Written by my true love's hand.

Side I; Band 7. LITTLE JOE, THE WRANGLER (Laws B 5)

Margaret Larkin, in her Singing Cowboy, credits N. Howard (Jack) Thorp, of Socorro, New Mexico, with the authorship of this "celebrated ballad". Thorp claimed to have written it in 1898 "while on the trail of O Cattle from Chimney Lake, New Mexico, to Higgins, Texas". Thorp published it in his Songs of the Cowboys in 1908. For a full discussion of the relationship of this collection and the publication of John A. Lomax's Cowboy Songs two years later, see D. K. Wilgus' Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship Since 1898, pp. 163-5. Regardless of authorship or publication dates, the song was quickly adopted by working cowhands and has been found in Texas, California, and the Ozarks. That is has been included in Laws' Native American Balladry testifies to its widespread popularity. Keith assumes that his father learned it while living in Kansas.

Oh, little Joe, the wrangler,
Will wrangle never more;
His days with the remuda are o'er.
It was a year ago last April
That he rode into our herd,
Just a little Texas stray and all alone.

It was late and in the evening
When he rode into our herd
On a little Texas pony he called Chaw;
With his brogan shoes and overalls,
A tougher looking chap
You never in your life before had saw.

He said he'd had to leave his home,
His maw had married twice,
His new pa whipped him every day or two.
So he saddled up old Chaw one night
And quietly rode away
And, now, he's trying to paddle his own canoe.

He said, if we would give him work,
He'd do the best he could,
Although he didn't know nothing about a cow.
So the boss he cut him out a mount
And kindly helped him on,
For he sort of liked that Texas stray, somehow.

We traveled up the Pecos,
The weather being fine;
We camped down by the south side of the bend.
When a Norther started blowing,
We called the extra guards,
For it'd take us all to hold those cattle in.

Now, little Joe, the wrangler,
Was called out with the rest;
The lad had scarcely gotten to the herd
When those cattle they stampeded,
Like a hailstorm on they fled,
And we all rode hell-for-leather for the lead.

Midst the flashes of the lightning,
A horseman we could see;
It was little Joe, the wrangler, in the lead.
He was riding old Blue Rocket
With a slicker o'er his head;
He was trying to check those cattle in the lead.

At last, we got them milling
And kindly settled down,
When the extra guards back to the wagon rode.
But one was a-missing,
We saw it at a glance,
It was our little Texas stray, poor wrangler Joe.

Next morning, just at daybreak,
We found where Rocket fell
Down in the washout, twenty feet below.
Beneath the horse's body,
A-lying where he fell,
Was our little Texas stray, poor wrangler Joe.

Oh, Little Joe, the wrangler,
Will wrangle never more;
His days with the remuda are o'er.
It was a year ago last April
That he rode into our herd,
Just a little Texas stray and all alone.

Side I; Band 8. UTAH CARL (Laws B 4)

Again, the fact that Laws has included this ballad in his Native American Balladry indicates its wide-spread popularity among America's traditional singers. A spoken introduction to a version in the Library of Congress Archive of American Folksong tells us that "J. T. Shirley of San Antonio, Texas, says that a cowboy on the Curve T Ranch in Schleicher County wrote this song", a belief which may or may not be true. To the sources listed in Laws, add Fife's Saints of Sage and Saddle (Utah). Folk-Legacy has recorded an interesting version from a New York State singer which utilizes a totally different, much more Victorian tune, which may indicate that it derived from a printed broadside text set to a tune of the singer's choice. This New York version is, as yet, unpublished. Laws comments that the story told in "this melodramatic ballad is probably fictional".

You ask of me, my little friend,
Why I am always sad,
Why my brow is darkened
Like the clouds o'er yonder hill.
Rein in your pony closer
And I'll tell to you the tale
Of Utah Carl, my partner,
And his last ride on the trail.

It was among those cattle thickened
In Mexico, fair land,
Where the cattle roamed by thousands
And many a herd they brand,
In a grave without a headstone,
Without a date or name,
In silence sleeps my partner
In the land from which I came.

It was on one Sunday morning,
Our work was almost done,
When out those cattle started
On a wild and maddened run.
Lenore, the boss's daughter,
Was a-holding on the side,
Rushed in to turn those cattle;
That's where my partner died.

In the saddle of the pony
Where the boss's daughter sat,
Utah, that very morning,
Had placed a red blanket
So the saddle might be easier
For Lenore, little friend,
But little did Utah know
That the blanket would be his end.

As Lenore turned her pony
To the cattle on the right,
The blanket slipped from beneath her,
Caught a stirrup and held on tight.
Now, there's nothing on a cow ranch
That'll make those cattle fight
As quick as some red object
That lays within their sight.

Lenore leaned from out her saddle,
The blanket to replace;
Lenore lost her balance,
Fell before the charging race.
As Lenore lost her balance,
She dragged the blanket down;
It lay there close beside her
Where she lay there on the ground.

About fifteen feet behind her,
Utah came riding fast.
He reached out so gently
To catch her in his arms.
Such weight upon the cinches
Was never seen before;
His front cinch broke beneath him
And he fell beside Lenore.

Utah picked up the blanket;
"Lie still, Lenore," he said.
As he ran across the prairie,
Well, he waved it o'er his head.
As he ran across the prairie,
"Lie still, Lenore," he cried,
"Lie still, Lenore, I'm coming,"
But we knew he must die.

Well, quick from out his scabbard,
The report came loud and clear;
As down they rushed upon him,
Well, he dropped the leading steer.
And, as down they rushed upon him,
We faintly heard him cry,
"Lie still, Lenore, I'm coming,"
But we knew he must die.

When we got to him,
The boys all thought him dead;
We picked him up so gently
And carried him to a bed.
But the last words that he uttered,
Oh, the last words that he cried
Were, "Lie still, Lenore, I'm coming,"
And then my partner died.

It was on one Sunday morning
I heard the preacher say,
"I don't think that this young cowboy
Was lost on that sad day,
For he was only a roaming cowboy
And was ready for to die.
I think that Utah Carl
Has a home beyond the sky."

Side II; Band 1. THERE'S A MOTHER ALWAYS WAITING YOU AT HOME

This is another of the Victorian songs which we have been unable to locate in any of the standard collections. Even Spaeth seems to have overlooked it. One naturally suspects a recorded source, but we have no evidence that Keith's father learned it from other than oral transmission. Still, one can-

not ignore the possibility that it crept into the folklore of America by way of an early recording.

"You are going to leave the old home, Jim;
Tomorrow you will leave.
You are going among the city folks to dwell."
Spoke these words, a kind old mother,
To her darling boy one day;
She spoke these words and then he went away.

"Oh, if sickness overtakes you
And old companions shake you,
As through this world you travel all alone,
If your friends you haven't any,
In your pockets not a penny,
There's a mother always waiting you at home."

Ten years later, there came a stranger
To this little town, unknown;
His walk was halt, his clothes were ragged and tore.
Oh, the children they all laughed at him
As up the lane he walked,
Then he stopped beside a little cottage door.

Oh, he knocked once, light; he heard no sound.
He thought, "Could she be dead?"
But then he heard a voice well known to him.
It was mother's voice, her hair had turned
To gray by touch of time.
She said, "Thank God, You've sent me home my Jim."

Side II; Band 2. THE BLIND CHILD

Laws, recognizing the wide provenience of this song, has listed it in his Appendix III - "Ballad-like Pieces". He describes the songs in this list as having "some of the characteristics of popular balladry" in that "they are sung traditionally, with variations, and frequently they have a marked narrative element." It seems strange that this particular piece, which epitomizes all that is sentimental in the songs of the Victorian era, should have been so widely reported, while less affected tear-jerkers have been either overlooked or ignored. That it was widely sung is demonstrated by the fact that Belden, Brown, Davis, Fuson, Henry, Randolph, Stout, and others have included it (see bibliography for titles of these collections) as from tradition. None of these sources offer any hint as to the name of the composer, however, and textual and melodic variations are many. One assumes that Laws included it, while omitting others like it, primarily because it has appeared in so many respectable collections, although he wisely places it in the category of "melodramatic and sentimental pieces, usually of professional origin."

"They say, dear Father, that tonight
You'll wed another bride;
That you shall take her in your arms
Where my dear mother died.
They say her name is Mary, too,
The name my mother bore,
But, Father, is she kind and true
Like the one you loved before?

"And are her footsteps soft and low,
Her voice so sweet and mild,
And, Father, will she love me, too,
Your blind and helpless child?
Oh, Father, do not bid me come
To meet your new made bride;
I could not meet her in the room
Where my dear mother died.

"Her picture hanging on the wall,
Her bible lying there,
And there's the harp her fingers touched,
And there's her vacant chair,
The chair whereby I used to kneel
To say my evening prayer.
Oh, Father, do not bid me come;
I could not greet her there.

"Now, let me kneel down by your side
And to the Savior pray
That God's right hand may lead you both
Over life's long, weary way.
And when I've cried myself to sleep,
As now I often do,
Into my chamber softly creep,
My new Mama and you.

"You bid her press a gentle kiss
Upon my throbbing brow,
Just as my own dear Mama did.
Why, Papa, you're crying now."
The prayer was murmured and she said,
"I'm growing weary now."
He laid her gently on the bed
And kissed her snow white brow.

And, as he turned to leave the room,
One joyful cry was given.
He turned, and caught the last sweet smile;
His blind child was in Heaven.

Side II; Band 3. POOR LITTLE JOE

Randolph (Vol. IV, pp. 180-1) reports this from Cabool,

Missouri, August 8, 1940. He notes that it had been printed in a Springfield newspaper as early as 1934 and that Louise Pound had found it in Nebraska as had Neely (Tales and Songs of Southern Illinois, 1938) in the state from which Keith Storm's version may have come. I have not been able to locate any versions predating these, although one would suspect that the song originated several decades prior to the above mentioned publications. Keith's version is quite similar to that printed by Randolph, although it omits the following opening verse:

While strolling one night through New York's gay throng,
I met a poor boy who was singing a song,
Although he was singing, he wanted for bread,
Although he was smiling, he wished himself dead.

Keith's text is as follows:

Cold blew the blast, down came the snow.
There was no place for shelter, nowhere to go.
No mother to guide him, in the grave she lay low.
Right out in the cold street stood poor little Joe.

I spoke to the poor boy out in the cold;
He had no place to shelter him, no place to go.
No mother to guide him, in the grave she lay low.
Cast out in the cold street was poor little Joe.

I looked on this waif and I thought it was odd,
This poor ragged urchin, forgotten by God.
I saw by the lamplight that fell on the snow
The pale deadly features of poor little Joe.

Along came a carriage with a lady inside;
She looked on poor Joe's face and saw that he cried.
He followed the carriage; she not even smiled,
But was fondly caressing her own darling child.

The lights had gone out and the clock it struck one,
When along came a policeman, his duty was done.
You would think by the sound of his dull, heavy tread
That he was awakening the sleep of the dead.

"Oh, what is this?" the policeman he said.
It was poor little Joe; on the ground he lie dead,
His eyes turned to Heaven, all covered with snow.
Right out in the cold street lay poor little Joe.

(Repeat first verse)

Side II; Band 4. PATCHED UP OLD DEVIL

This grimly humorous piece is reminiscent of the well-known song of the old maid who, after removing her glass eye and her false hair, threatens to shoot the burglar who has witnessed the cosmetic dismantling from his hiding place under her bed unless he agrees to marry her. The punch line comes from the poor burglar who, finding no other means of escape, cries, "Woman, for the Lord's sake, SHOOT!" (See Hudson, Folksongs of Mississippi, pp. 249-250) It's too late, however, for the unfortunate chap in Keith's song — he is already married to the deceptive creature. The advice offered in the final stanza puts one in mind of the professor from the University of Illinois who recently created quite a stir by publicly advocating similar pre-marital exploration. I have not found any printed versions of Keith's song, although Lawrence Older of Middle Grove, New York, (FSA-15) seemed to be reminded of a similar song when he heard the tapes of this record prior to their release. Lawrence's text, fragmentary though it was, indicated considerable variation, suggesting that the song may have wider traditional currency that the standard collections indicate.

As I was out walking down by the seaside,
(It) was there, by chance, a fair dame I espied.
She was tall, neat and handsome, and the truth I'll unfold,
I took her to be eighteen or nineteen years old.

Her fingers they tapered, her neck like a swan;
Her nose it turned up and her voice not too strong.
(In) six weeks we were married, the wedding bells tolled;
I'd married this virgin of nineteen years old.

The wedding being over, we retired to rest.
My hair stood straight up when I saw her undress.
A carload of padding this maid did unfold;
She was closer to ninety than nineteen years old.

When she took off her left leg clear up to her knee,
Next came her fingers — I counted just three.
When she took out her glass eye, on the carpet it rolled.
Now, wasn't she handsome at nineteen years old?

When she scraped off her eyebrows, I thought I would faint,
And off from her thin cheeks a carload of paint.
When she took off her false hair, her bald head did show.
Now, tell me, do you think she was nineteen years old?

When she took out her false teeth, I jumped up in
pain;
Her nose and her chin came together again.
I fled from that chamber, no more to behold
That patched up old devil of ninety years old.

Now, come all you young men, take a warning from
me:
Examine your Polly from her head to her knee.
Disregarding my folly, and you may behold
Some patched up old devil of ninety years old.

Side II; Band 5. JIM BLAKE, YOUR WIFE IS DYING

Spaeth includes this in Weep Some More, My Lady, as does Shay in More Pious Friends and Drunken Companions, but neither gives us a clue as to its composer. Shay tells us that it is "as sung by James O'Reilley", a fact that contributes little to our knowledge, but, then, his is not an attempt at scholarship; it is simply a book to be enjoyed. Perhaps we should approach Keith's singing of the song in much the same spirit.

"Jim Blake, your wife is dying,"
Came over the wires tonight;
Brought late into my office
By his boy, half crazed with fright.
He came rushing into my office,
His face it was pale and white,
Saying, "Take this to Dad in his engine,
For Mother is dying tonight."

Now, when I saw this message
Was for my comrade, Jim,
I made no delay, but hastened right away
And sent this message to him.
Jim Blake was our oldest driver,
In charge of the Midnight Express;
He'd handled that throttle lever
Most of his life, I guess.

In less than a half an hour,
This message came back from Jim:
"Tell Wifey I'll meet her at midnight;
Tell her to wait for Jim."
I left his son in my office;
This message I took to his wife.
I found a dying woman
With scarcely a breath of life.

And when I entered her chamber
She took me, at first, for Jim,
But she fell back, dying and exhausted,
When she saw that I was not him.

She lay back on her pillow,
Her face it was pale and white.
She said, in a dying whisper,
"God speed the express tonight."

In less than a half an hour
The train it will be along,
When, lo, here comes a signal
Stating that something's wrong.
It tells of a sad disaster;
The train lies in the ditch.
The engineer lies dying,
Derailed by an open switch.

And still another message,
From the engineer, I guess:
"Tell Wifey I'll meet her in Heaven,
Not to wait for the Midnight Express."

Side II; Band 6. THE GREAT EXPLOSION

Keith Storm, as he tells us in his spoken introduction on the record, composed this song shortly after the disaster it describes. Pat Dunford tells of the event:

"The song concerns the explosion of a propane gas tank at the Coliseum in Indianapolis on October 31, 1963. The gas was being used to heat food at various concession stands during the 1963 Ice Review and the tank itself was located underneath one of the cement grandstands. When some of the gas escaped, it was ignited by the glowing coils of an electric heater and the ignited escaped gas carried the flame into the tank itself. When it exploded, the entire section of the grandstand under which it was located was blown apart, throwing spectators through the air onto the ice below, and some even clear across the ice to the other side of the grandstands. Many were killed instantly, while others died later of injuries and some of shock. Altogether, more than seventy people were killed in the disaster and even now, months later, many are still hospitalized, some still in critical condition."

Come and listen to me, people,
And a story I will tell;
It tells a sad disaster
On Indiana fell, boys,
On Indiana fell.

Many were assembled
There to see the show,
But the fate that did await them
Of little did they know, boys,
Of little did they know.

Men, women, and children
Were gathered there to see
The show, The Ice Review,
In all its majesty, boys,
In all its majesty.

It was near unto the time
To ring the curtains down,
Then came the great explosion
Heard for miles around, boys,
Heard for miles around.

Oh, the great explosion,
How it rumbled, how it roared;
The blast, the fire, the mighty flash,
As up and up it soared,
Reaping death and injury
On many gathered there.
In the Coliseum,
The coffin they would share.

Men, women, and children
Were thrown into the air;
Flesh, blood and clothing
Were scattered everywhere, boys,
Were flying everywhere.

Many people died
And many people wept
At the scene they saw before them,
A sight they'd ne'er forget, boys,
A sight they'd ne'er forget.

Many lost their families,
Brothers, sisters, wives.
Little babies they were crying
Amidst the sobs and sighs, boys,
Amidst the sobs and sighs.

And, if you live to be
A hundred years old,
You'll never, ever, ever hear
A sadder story told, boys,
A sadder story told.

Oh, the great explosion,
How it rumbled, how it roared;
The blast, the fire, the mighty flash,
As up and up it soared,
Reaping death and injury
On many gathered there.
In the Coliseum,
The coffin they would share.

Many of you wonder
Just how this thing could be,
How God, in all his mercy,
Could allow this thing you see, boys,
Could allow this thing you see.

But ours is not to question
The One up in the sky;
Ours is but to bury the dead
And mourn and weep and cry, boys,
And mourn and weep and cry.

And as I write these words
The tears they blind my eyes,
Thinking of the many
That lost their precious lives, boys,
That lost their precious lives,

Thinking of the many
That lived to mourn in vain,
Hoping that this story
I'll never write again, boys,
I'll never write again.

Oh, the great explosion,
How it rumbled, how it roared;
The blast, the fire, the mighty flash,
As up and up it soared,
Reaping death and injury
On many gathered there.
In the Coliseum,
The coffin they would share.

Side II; Band 7. THE SPARROW'S QUESTION

Another of Keith's own compositions, this one avoids the specific and approaches the metaphysical. One wonders just what Keith had in mind when he wrote it, but, like all good metaphysicians, he refuses to be more explicit. You are welcome to interpret the meaning of the song as you see fit; the Oracle of Apollo at Delphi offered no more.

Oh, come hear my song and it's not very long;
It concerns a little sparrow who sat in a tree.
And, as he sat, he sang a song,
A song that I'll relate to thee.

"Oh, you people, oh, you people that pass by
this tree,
Will you answer, will you answer this question
for me?
As you pass through this world, now what is
your goal,
And what would you give in exchange for your
soul?"

There were many who tried to answer his question;
There were many who tried and many were wrong.
There were many who came and many who left,
But the sparrow kept singing his mournful song.

"Oh, you people, oh, you people that pass by
this tree,
Will you answer, will you answer this question
for me?
As you pass through this world, now what is
your goal,
And what would you give in exchange for your
soul?"

Now the sparrow's still singing his song in the
tree,
But the people no longer come to see.
But as I keep moving and a-rolling along,
I'll keep on a-singing the sparrow's song.

"Oh, you people, oh, you people that pass by
this tree,
Will you answer, will you answer this question
for me?
As you pass through this world, now what is
your goal,
And what would you give in exchange for your
soul?"

Side II; Band 8. NINETY AND NINE

This widely known and deeply loved hymn was composed by Ira David Sankey (1840-1908) in 1874, under most unusual circumstances. Sankey was a Methodist whose home was in Pennsylvania. He fought as a volunteer with the Union forces in the Civil War, after which he became active in the YMCA. He later traveled with the evangelist, Dwight L. Moody. Sankey wrote the words of only a few hymns, but he composed the music for many. It was at a meeting in Edinburgh that he first sang the hymn recorded here. The story is described in Benjamin Brawley's History of the English Hymn, from which the following quotation is taken.

"Mr. Moody had just spoken with great power of 'The Good Shepherd,' and Doctor Bonar had followed with a few fervidly eloquent words. It was his (Sankey's) turn to sing something, but nothing that he could think of seemed to fit the occasion. 'Sing the hymn you found on the train,' a voice seemed to say; and he thought of a little poem he had clipped from a Christian paper on his journey to the city. The words were by Mrs. Elizabeth C. Clephane (1830-1869), a native of Scotland who had died just five years before. They had never been set to music,

however, and the singer had to keep his eye on the verses at the same time that he was composing the tune. With a prayer for guidance, however, he entered upon the first stanza, and thus a new melody was born, in the presence of more than a thousand people. Sankey afterward said it was the most intense moment of his life."

There were ninety and nine that safely lay
In the shelter of the fold;
But one was out on the hills far away,
Far off from the gates of gold.
Away on the mountains, wild and bare,
Away from the tender Shepherd's care,
Away from the tender Shepherd's care.

Lord, thou hast here thy ninety and nine;
Are they not enough for thee?
But the Shepherd made answer: "'Tis of mine
Has wandered away from me.
And although the road be rough and steep,
I go to the desert to find my sheep,
I go to the desert to find my sheep."

But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed,
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed through
Ere he found his sheep that was lost.
Out in the desert he heard its cry,
Sick and helpless and ready to die,
Sick and helpless and ready to die.

Lord, whence are those blood drops all the way
That mark out the mountain's track?
"They were shed for one who had gone astray
Ere the Shepherd could bring him back."
Lord, whence are thy hands so rent and torn?
"They are pierced tonight by many a thorn,
They are pierced tonight by many a thorn."

But all through the mountains, thunder-riven,
And up from the rocky steep,
There arose a cry to the gates of Heaven,
"Rejoice! I have found my sheep!"
And the angels echoed around the throne,
"Rejoice, for the Lord brings back his own,
Rejoice, for the Lord brings back his own!"

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