

"Interpreters Series"

FSI-28

Songs and Ballads sung by

SANDY and JEANIE DARLINGTON



PHOTO BY HOWIE MITCHELL

Side 1:

HONEY BABE BLUES
GYPSY GIRL
DAYS OF '49
THAT JUST AIN'T THE CASE
McFEE'S CONFESSION
JELLO
WHEN I DIE

Side 2:

POOR MAN, RICH MAN
GOLD WATCH AND CHAIN
THE LETTER THAT NEVER CAME
COCAINE
TROUBLIN' MIND
BURY ME NOT ON THE LONE PRAIRIE
LITTLE WILLIE
WHERE THE SOUL OF MAN NEVER DIES



FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS, INC. HUNTINGTON, VERMONT

*Songs and Ballads sung by***SANDY and JEANIE
DARLINGTON***Recorded by Sandy Paton**Notes by Sandy Darlington*

Jeanie comes from New Jersey, and I come from Washington State. We met in Paris in February, 1963, when I was finishing a novel and she was studying. The novel business and the studying business didn't pan out, so we sang in the streets. Now things are looking up, and we sing indoors.

In the late thirties, James Agee wrote a book about three families of tenant farmers in Alabama called *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. That phrase is the first line of a poem from the Apocrypha. The whole poem sums up what a lot of us think is important about America, our people, our music, and our heritage, and what we are trying to do, using folk music as our means:

*Let us now praise famous men,
And our fathers that begat us.
The Lord hath wrought great glory by them
Through his great power from the beginning.
Such as did bear rule in their kingdoms,
Men renowned for their power,
Giving counsel by their understanding,
And declaring prophecies;
Leaders of the people by their counsels,
And by their knowledge of learning meet for the people,
Wise and eloquent in their instructions:
Such as found out musical tunes,
And recited verses in writing:
Rich men furnished with ability,
Living peaceably in their habitations:
All these were honoured in their generations,
And were the glory of their times.
There be of them, that have left a name behind them,
That their praises might be reported.
And some there be, which have no memorial;
Who are perished, as though they had never been;
And are become as though they had never been born;
And their children after them.
But these were merciful men, whose righteousness hath
not been forgotten;
With their seed shall continually remain a good inheritance,
And their children are within the covenant.
Their seed standeth fast, and their children for their
sakes.
Their seed shall remain forever,
And their glory shall not be blotted out.
Their bodies are buried in peace;
But their name liveth for evermore.
The people will tell of their wisdom,
And the congregation will shew forth their praises.*

—Ecclesiasticus, Chapter 44

Folk music has come to have a real function in all our lives. In a vague but real way, "We," the singers and audiences together, form a community of our own. At some time most of us have hitch-hiked, sat on floors, read a lot, not read at all, wanted to live away from everybody, and worried about the world, about what the people who run things would mess up next, and about what we might do to improve things. We're mostly urban people, out of power and nervous. And one of the things we do is use folk music. Most of us have no genuine connection with any folk community, and these songs are not genuine to us in an objective way. In other words, nobody thinks we're natives, and we don't have a native music. But since we don't we're free (given a good bit of nerve) to grab whatever music we like and use it. The result is that we end up doing just like mountain people, or blues singers, or cowboys, but relative to our own situation: singing in order to stay sane, and stubborn, and to have a good time, and to say how we feel.

Sandy Darlington

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SANDY AND JEANIE DARLINGTON



**Recorded by Sandy Paton
Notes by Sandy Darlington**

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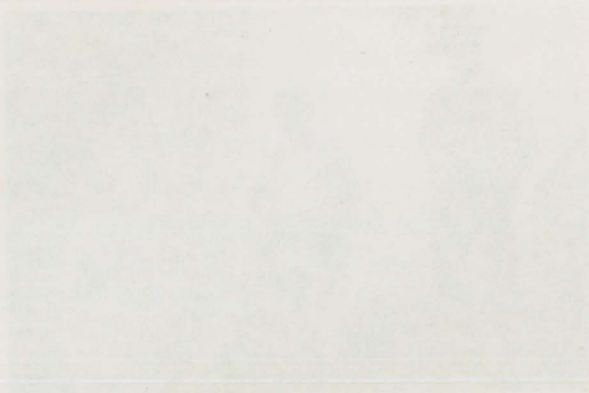
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SANDY AND JEANIE

DARLINGTON



Portrait of Sandy & Jeanie
Taken by family photographer

1910



COLLEGE RECORDS

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SANDY AND JEANIE

When you talk about American music, it's easy to get sidetracked into a purely technical discussion. When you like something as much as we like this music, you want to tell everybody why, and since everybody hasn't spent so much time listening to it as you have, it's easy to decide to praise it in terms of what might attract the new listener: its rhythmic drive and instrumental stylization. Therefore, people talk about Bill Monroe's mandolin technique or Mississippi John Hurt's guitar style, and sometimes forget that these musicians use their technical ability to strengthen their music, not to gloss it over.

What makes Bill Monroe, for example, really important is not simply that he invented bluegrass. He didn't get up one morning and say, "Well, today I guess I'll invent bluegrass." He developed his approach to music over a number of years, and he did it because he had to play and sing that way: it was right for him. What makes him important is just that: his honesty. When he sings, he sings what is true for him. That's hard to do, and it's even harder to hear, especially for outsiders, like city people, because what is really important is done — and this holds for most kinds of American music — off-handedly, with what often appears to new listeners to be indifference, when actually it's a reflection of the way things are done in American life.

For example, we were in a mountain town in Kentucky recently, waiting for a church to begin so we could hear some old hymns. Men were talking about how a lady'd been shot on a picket line some weeks back, was still in the hospital, and might lose her leg. They'd all known the man who did it. He'd committed suicide a few days before, and they'd hoped he'd leave a confession behind, as that would free the two men who were being held in jail awaiting trial for the crime. He didn't.

"Well, it's too bad," a man said. "But it doesn't really matter. They'll be let off anyway."

Then he started telling us how hard life was in those parts.

"Around here, it's so steep that when we want to mine, we just cut into the bottom of a hill and let the coal slide down into the trucks."

He saw that we didn't know anything about mining and might just believe him, so he tried again.

"Around here, it's so steep that we plant potatoes on their sides so they'll grow straight up, and when we want to dig them up, we just cut a notch in the bottom of the hill and catch them as they roll down."

We all grinned at that, and he could see that at least we knew potatoes.

"Actually," he said, with a shrug, "That's not true, not a word of it. We plant potatoes the same way everybody does."

The shrug was important, and his unnecessary explanation. The story had been all right, but anybody could have told it, so after he'd finished he put his own twist on it, with a shrug and an explanation. That way he made it his own. And that's when it became good. You have to give it your own sound. Then it might still sound off-handed, but it's your own way of being off-handed.

Underneath there is strength, and a quiet pride, and an absolute determination to survive, no matter what they throw at you. Listen to the Carter Family. They are quiet even on the surface, but something in their music strikes country people as true and brave, and you can hear it clearly, after a while.

We had a young American couple staying with us in London for a while. They both came from my home town, and the girl's people are good friends of mine. They'd never heard much folk music before, but they couldn't get out of it, staying around us. The girl's parents had been blown out of the Dakotas in the thirties. They'd had six years of bad crops and finally just gave up and left. After she'd heard the Carter Family and Woody Guthrie, the girl told us that her mother used to tell her stories about that life.

"One year we rented a dried-up lake bottom. They're supposed to have good soil. We planted flax. It bloomed with a blue flower, so when you looked out across the lake, you thought it was full of water again. That was the year the grasshoppers came."

If you bear that in mind and then listen to the Carter Family sing "You Are My Flower", maybe you'll begin to understand their music.

The grass is just as green,
The sky is just as blue;
The day is just as bright,
The birds are singing, too.
 You are my flower
 That's blooming in the mountain so high.
 You are my flower
 That's blooming there for me.
So wear a happy smile
And life will be worth while;
Forget the tears
And don't forget to smile.

The tune isn't much, and neither are the words. But the attitude is, and that's the point. It's not a question of music or of poetry, but of life: how to keep going. The people who sang this music and listened to it were the ones who had things the hardest. They didn't commonly sing what we think of as protest songs. Instead they built dreams, they took a stand in their hearts, like poor people will spend their last bit of money to start buying a set of furniture on credit, knowing full well from experience that sooner or later something will go wrong, they won't be able to keep up payments, and they'll lose the furniture. It's a way to persist in spite of it all, to triumph over emptiness.

This world is not my home, I'm just a-passing through;
My treasures and my hopes are placed beyond the blue.
Angels beckon me through heaven's open door,
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore.
— from an old hymn as done by the Monroe Brothers.

But truly I have wept too much. The dawns are
heartbreaking.
Every moon is cruel, every sun bitter:
Sour love has bloated me with torpors that make
me drunk.
O that my keel might burst! O that I might go to
the sea!
— from "Le Bateau Ivre;" Rimbaud. Translation
by Richard Lourie.

The foreign sun it squints upon a bed that is never
mine
As friends and other strangers from their fates try
to resign
Leaving men wholly totally free to do anything they
wish to do but die
And there are no trials inside the Gates of Eden.
— from "The Gates of Eden," Bob Dylan.

Underneath the apparent difference, city music in America is much the same as country music, though it's hardly ever stoical, and not as quiet. Maybe you have to make more noise to be heard in a city, where there is more honking anyway.

Now, because of segregation, there've been more or less separate traditions of white and Negro country music. Lately people have begun to realize and admit that there was actually a lot of exchange, but still there was mostly separation. But in the Northern cities, even with all the discrimination, the music has been partially mixed for a long time. In fact, when it's been vital, it's been made mainly by Negroes and listened to by both whites and Negroes.

This is the music called Rhythm and Blues. For all of us who came from cities or whose hearts tended toward cities (those of us, that is, who, when we dreamed of running away from home, wanted to end up in New York or Paris and not out on some farm), R&B was our music. We danced to it, sneered at Authority with it, made out by it, grew up with it, and just plain forgot about everything with it.

We never listened to the words much, because they didn't matter. We'd already heard too many words. Only the attitude mattered and that was: if you don't like the way we do things, drop dead. One aspect of it was a kind of protest, of the young against the adult world, or of Negroes against a white world, of people with no power against the System.

We knew the System was fixed, and we couldn't see a way to fight it, so we backed out. And R&B, like country music, gave you your own place off in the corner of your mind where you could curse away in peace, without fear of retaliation, or where you could sip beer and cool it. It was our own magic ring to get inside of, where we could be safe for awhile. It gave us a dream, like Pete Seeger's music gives us that dream that brotherhood is right here if we just believe, or like the Carter Family and Billie Holliday have that dream that says that life is sad and lonely, but never merely hungry. The people would never admit that they were licked, that they should give up dreaming and just scramble for food. No matter how ratty the apartment is, you buy some curtains, or a radio or a record player, and then you listen to Billie, or to Chuck Berry, or to Jimmie Rodgers, and then nobody can take your hopes away.

Right now things are supposed to be pretty good. Most people have jobs and a lot have good suburban homes, with washers and driers and cars. And yet they still get batty: it turns out that's not heaven either. Farmers raise hens and cows rationally now: they leave the lights on so the hen thinks it's always a new day and lays more eggs, and they play music for the cows, so they'll be contented and give more milk. We get treated the same way in the supermarkets with the long aisles, the bright cans, the stamps, everything wrapped so fancy that you work a good part of your week to pay for wrappers, and we get soupy music pumped at us to make us contented. It does make us buy a lot, and most of us have a lot of free time, but it turns out that the System works better on hens and cows than on us. It turns out you can still be hungry with plenty to eat.

Bob Dylan writes about that. With "Bringing It All Back Home" and since, he's begun a very serious form of writing aimed directly at an urban audience. That is something very much needed in America, and especially on the folk scene where too many people have come to like country music because they find it

tranquil, because it allows them to escape back into a mythical past that was never theirs. Dylan upsets them because he's describing directly to all of us a world we know quite well, since it's ours: urban America, right now.

Of course he's not attacked directly for that, because then the critics would have to compare his work with a lot of things they don't want to admit are part of our world in the first place. They'd have to talk about Chuck Berry and Brecht. They'd have to talk about "Endgame" by Beckett, about "The Blacks" by Genet, about "The Hunger Artist" by Kafka, about "Notes from Underground" by Dostoyevsky, or about "Bartleby the Scrivener"/and "Benito Cereno" by Melville. Those are works which describe life as it is lived in the USA today.

That life is exactly what the critics do not want to face. Therefore, he's attacked because he's ended what you might call his apprenticeship to Woody Guthrie, and because he's lost that Huck Finn air that people were able to accept as merely cute. He's attacked for not making folk music, meaning "traditional" music, when one of the greatest things about American music is that those who made it have always re-arranged it until they found their own style, their own truth. He's attacked because he's using R&B backing, but when

"You used to ride on a chrome horse with your
diplomat
Who carried on his shoulder a Siamese cat..."

what kind of music did you tune in on your car radio? It wasn't always Vivaldi or WWVA. People find it hard to admit all the back alleys of our way of life, but don't tell me we weren't out in the car, or up in some apartment, or someplace else doing our growing up, a long way from the country. There's not many of us actually come from that homestead on the farm, now are there? No, but we'd like to think so. It's the old American country boy dream, of apple pie and Mom and the pony, that you can hear put so eloquently in the campaign speeches of Richard Nixon and Lyndon Johnson, and although we may scoff at them, we sure do like that old dream.

That's what bothers us about Dylan. He's growing up and he's started to sing grown-up songs to us like we were grown-ups. He's broken his toys and now he's breaking ours. So people say he's finked. And he has. He's blown the whistle. He's popped the American dream like a watermelon and opened it up and started to show what it's like inside. And there's not many who want to take America straight.

I don't mean to imply that Dylan's music is "universal" any more than the Carter Family's is. It is aimed at urban

Americans. I don't know how much of it pertains outside that group. Like all the other kinds of American music that work well in their own neighborhood, it probably loses most of its meaning as it travels. Each kind of music is real only for a small portion of our people.

That's hard for Americans to admit because we have in the American Dream the notion of Equality, and we confuse matters sometimes by assuming that this means that our habits are alike: that if we were all at dinner together we'd enjoy each other's cooking. That may be possible in a cafeteria where the food is made bland on purpose so as not to offend anyone, just as it's possible with commercialized folk music. But when each neighborhood comes up with its most vital music or its most indigenous food, everybody else doesn't take to it instantly. One can learn, but it takes time. Go to a Mexican neighborhood, try some chile verde, and you'll see what I mean.

These differences cause a lot of tensions (to put it mildly!), but they also make us an interesting people, who have never really melted in a pot into being all alike. Unfortunately, some commentators have tried to set up a standard as to what is a "good" American, and then to judge everything else on the basis of that. When such a judgement is phrased in terms of race, it's easy to see through. In music, it means that if Bill Monroe is great, then Pete Seeger should drop dead. Or vice versa. It might be harder to recognize there for what it is, but it's the same: viciousness and bigotry.

That's why I've been talking about two different kinds of music, the Carter Family's and Bob Dylan's: not to convert you to liking one or the other, because that's your own business, but to push what you might call peaceful coexistence in folk music. I know it's a long way from the Carter Family to Bob Dylan. I also know that I've left out a lot of important people and kinds of music: Fannie Lou Hamer and the whole civil rights movement; or Blind Lemon Jefferson and the blues tradition; or Sacred Harp Singing; or the Puerto Rican church music you can hear in store front churches on the Lower East Side or uptown in New York; or Mexican music, from Mexico. I mention that because all through these notes I've been talking about "America" and "Americans" when actually I've only considered the people of the United States. It's verbally simpler, but inaccurate because actually America is a continent, in fact two, full of other countries, like Cuba, Mexico, and Puerto Rico, whose music and people have much of the same brashness and pride as ours:

Dicen que no tengo duelo, llorona,
Porque no me ven a llorar.
Hay muertos que no hacen ruido, llorona,
Y es mas grande su pena.

They say I don't feel anything, llorona,
Because they never saw me cry.
Dead people don't cry either, llorona,
And they have the most pain of all.

We have a lot in common with them and with each other, and we should stress that rather than our differences. Perhaps, in time, as the dust settles, some of those who find Dylan's music so un-folkish and jangled will have a chance to listen with an open mind to the great singers of the United States like Frank Proffitt, Dock Boggs, Vera Hall, Billie Holliday, Bill Monore, and Mississippi John Hurt. Then they'll hear that our music has always been highly individualized and strong, and that we should all listen closer to all the kinds of our music, because we have a lot to learn about ourselves and our heritage, and much of it can be learned through music.

Folk music has come to have a real function in all our lives. In a vague but real way, "We", the singers and audience together, form a community of our own. At some time most of us hitch-hiked, sat on floors, read a lot, not read at all, wanted to live away from everybody, and worried about the world, about what the people who run things would mess up next, and about what we might do to improve things. We're mostly urban people, out of power and nervous. And one of the things we do is use folk music. Most of us have no genuine connection with any folk community, and these songs are not genuine to us in an objective way. In other words, nobody thinks we're natives, and we don't have a native music. But since we don't, we're free (given a good bit of nerve) to grab whatever music we like and use it. The result is that we end up doing just like mountain people, or blues singers, or cowboys, but relative to our own situation: singing in order to stay sane, and stubborn, to have a good time, and to say how we feel.

In the late thirties, James Agee wrote a book about three families of tenant farmers in Alabama. He called it Let Us Now Praise Famous Men. That phrase is the first line of a poem from the Apocrypha. The whole poem sums up what a lot of us think is important about America, about our people, our music, and our heritage, and what we are trying to do, using folk music as our means:

Let us now praise famous men,
And our fathers that begat us.
The Lord hath wrought great glory by them
Through his great power from the beginning.
Such as did bear rule in their kingdoms,
Men renowned for their power,
Giving counsel by their understanding,
And declaring prophecies;

Leaders of the people by their counsels,
 And by their knowledge of learning meet for the people,
 Wise and eloquent in their instructions:
 Such as found out musical tunes,
 And recited verses in writing:
 Rich men furnished with ability,
 Living peaceably in their habitations:
 All these were honoured in their generations,
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 Who are perished, as though they had never been;
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 been forgotten;
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 Their bodies are buried in peace;
 But their name liveth for evermore.
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 And the congregation will shew forth their praises.

— Ecclesiasticus, Chapter 44

Side I; Band 1. HONEY BABE BLUES

Sandy: lead voice and guitar
 Jeanie: harmony and fiddle

Source: Old-Time Music at Clarence Ashley's (Folkways FA2355)

We wanted a modal song that we could harmonize and that used fiddle. This is the first one we got. Jeanie made up the harmony.

CHORUS: Well, I ain't got no honey baby now.
 Well, I ain't got no honey baby now.
 Well, it's oh-oh me, oh-oh Lordy my,
 I ain't got no honey baby now.

I'm leaving on that early morning train.
 I'm leaving on that early morning train.
 Well, it's oh-oh me, oh-oh Lordy my,
 Well, I'm leaving on that early morning train. CHORUS.

I'll see you when your troubles is like mine, etc.

It's good girl, you ain't no girl of mine, etc. CHORUS.

I'm goin' if I don't stay here long, etc. CHORUS.

Side I; Band 2. GYPSY GIRL

Jeanie: vocal and fiddle

Sandy: guitar

Source: Charlie Poole and the North Carolina Ramblers

Other versions: Horton Barker ("The Gypsy's Wedding Day"):

Folkways FA2362; Printed as sung by Joseph Taylor and

collected by Percy Grainger, Journal of the (English)

Folk-Song Society, No. 12, May, 1908.

We first heard this song done by Tom Paley at the Edinburgh Festival in 1964, and shortly after we got tapes of Poole's version from both Tom and Ken Frankel. We were told by Leslie Hawthorth that the song was of Irish origin, but later he admitted that whenever he didn't know where a song came from, he said Ireland. So much for scholarship. It is a broadside ballad and was collected in various parts of England in the early part of this century.

Once I was a gypsy girl
But now I'm a rich man's bride,
With servants to wait on me
While in my carriage ride.

While in my carriage ride,
While in my carriage ride,
With servants to wait on me
While in my carriage ride.

When I was a-strolling
One day down London's street,
A handsome young squire
Was the first I chanced to meet.

He viewed my pretty brown cheeks
Which now he loves so well;
He said, "My little gypsy girl,
Will you my fortune tell?

Will you my fortune tell," etc.

"Yes, sir, kind sir,
Please hold to me your hand.
You have many fine mansions
In many a foreign land.

But all those fine young ladies,
You'll cast them all aside;
I am the gypsy girl
Who is to be your bride.
Who is to be your bride," etc.

He took me, he led me
To a place on a quiet shore,
With servants to wait on me
And open my own door.
And open my own door, etc.

Side I; Band 3. DAYS OF '49

Sandy: vocal

Source: Diana Sternbach, a friend.

Apparently, this song was first published shortly after the Gold Rush by a man who sang around mining camps in the West. Later, it was included by John and Alan Lomax in Folk Song USA. My version has a slightly different tune and set of words.

I'm old Tom Moore from the bummers' shore
In the good old golden days.
They call me a bummers and a gin sot, too,
But what care I for praise.
I wander 'round from town to town
Just like a rovin' sign
And the people all say, "There goes Tom Moore
From the days of '49."

CHORUS: From the days of old, in the days of gold,
Well, oft-times I repine
For the days of old when we dug up the gold
In the days of '49.

There was New York Jake, he was the butcher's boy,
He was always gettin' tight,
And just as soon as he'd get a few drinks,
He'd start lookin' 'round for a fight.
One night he leaned up against a knife
In the hands of old Bob Sine,
And over Jake, well, we held a little wake
In the days of '49.

There was rag-shag Bill come from Buffalo town,
I never will forget;
He'd roar all day and he'd roar all night,
Well, I guess he's a-roarin' yet.
One night he fell in a prospect hole
In a roarin' bad design,
And in that hole he roared out his soul
In the days of '49.

Well, of all the friends that I had then,
There's none that's left to boast,
And I'm left alone in my misery here,
Like some poor wanderin' ghost.
And as I roam from town to town
They call me the rovin' sign,
"There goes Tom Moore, and he's a bummer for sure
From the days of '49.

CHORUS: From the days of old, in the days of gold,
Well, oft-times I repine
For the days of old when we dug up the gold
In the days of '49.

Side I; Band 4. THAT JUST AIN'T THE CASE

Sandy: lead voice and guitar
Jeanie: harmony

CHORUS: I got the blues, I can't be satisfied,
I got the blues, I can't be satisfied,
I got the blues, gonna take that train and ride.

People come to me, tell me all they know sometimes,
Say you've got an understandin' look on your face.
Well, I'm sure sorry, but that just ain't the case.

Understandin's not the same as livin' every day,
You can know just a little too much, so finally you get away.
Oh, I'm sure sorry...that's the case. CHORUS.

There's so few things to keep a good man goin',
There's just a few things that'll keep any man goin';
That's whiskey, women, and the dream of havin' a home.

It's not so bad when you're just hangin' around,
It's another thing when they get you all tied down.
When you don't own much, it's easy to pack and run. CHORUS.

I died once, I'll never be back again;
It was a long time ago, I did not feel no pain:
Lost my home and my woman, and here is the drivin' rain.

You walk outdoors, you feel like you might freeze,
You use strangers' houses, pick from strangers' trees,
Take your mind off your troubles, leave when you please.

You mighta thought it'd be easy somehow,
You mighta thought it'd be a game somehow.
You mighta thought that once, you don't think it now. CHORUS.

Side I; Band 5. McFEE'S CONFESSION

Jeanie: vocal and guitar

Source: Vance Randolph, Ozark Folksongs, Vol. II.

Vance Randolph is, for many reasons, one of the greatest collectors of folk songs. He was among the first to include "hillbilly" music in a serious collection and gave, therefore, a much clearer picture than most of what American country music is actually like. His documentation is always painstakingly honest and thorough. His transcriptions — of words, of irregular shifts and variations in meter, of intricate and improbable tunes — are extremely accurate. It has been argued that native American songs have uninteresting or facile melodies. Randolph's four volume Ozark collection offers proof to the contrary.

Quite often we choose to do songs simply for their attitude, that is for what we feel it is possible for us to communicate emotionally through the song, regardless of the quality of either the words or the tune. That is necessary in much of American folk music because the surface so often gives no indication of the possible depths. This song, however, also happens to have good words and a good tune. It has been collated and abridged from two of Randolph's texts. We learned this song and "Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie" from Dick Lourié. The song is listed in Laws' Native American Balladry as F 13; with the comment that "John McAfee was found guilty of the murder of his wife and was hanged near Dayton, Ohio, March 28, 1825."

Come all young men and listen to me,
A sad and mournful history,
And may you ne'er forgetful be
Of what you learn from Bob McFee.

Before I reached my fifteenth year,
My father and my mother dear
Were both laid in their silent grave
Beside them who their being gave.

Beneath an uncle's kindly roof,
From want and danger and reproof,
Nine years was I most kindly served,
And good advice I often heard.

But I was thoughtless, young and gay,
And I often broke the Sabbath day;
In wickedness I took delight
And oft-times did what was not right.

At length my uncle did me chide,
And I turned from home dissatisfied;
I took unto myself a life,
I took unto myself a wife.

My woman she was good to me,
As any woman needs to be;
And she'd be living without a doubt
If I had not met Miss Hattie Stout.

It was on a balmy summer's night;
All things were still, the stars were bright;
My wife was laying on her bed
When I approached her and said:

"Dear wife, here's medicine I've brought,
This day for you that I have bought;
Of these wild fits it will cure you;
Oh, take it, dear, oh darling, do."

Ten thousand pounds I'd freely give
To bring her back again to live,
To bring her back again to life,
My dear, my darling murdered wife.

Her body lies beneath the sod,
Her soul, I trust, is with its God,
And soon into eternity
My guilty soul must also be.

Young men, young men, be warned by me:
Keep away from bad company
And walk in ways of righteousness,
And God your souls will surely bless.

Side I; Band 6. JELLO

Sandy: vocal and guitar

Jell-O (U. S. Pat. No. 2657996, Pat. Pending) is the registered trade mark for a gelatin dessert made by the General Foods Corp., White Plains, N. Y., U. S. A. I wish to point out to the owners, managers, stock-holders, and employees of the General Foods Corporation that this song should not be taken as a protest against their product. In fact, I absolutely adore their gelatin dessert and urge everyone to go out and buy some right now. As for the song, it's about something else.

It's a hard funny place, so few people care,
It's not they don't care about you, they don't care about
themselves,
They don't know their neighbors, they don't know their dog,
They don't even know their breakfast food, around here.

They go out and live on lemonade,
They're made out of Jello and it makes me afraid;
Call it what you want, it's got to be a little thick,
If it's just too sunny, I fall sick.

There's all these raspberry people, strawberry ones, too,
They got pineapple minds and hearts like blueberry stew,
But I can't take it like that, there's just too much fat;
I'm slimming in the head, can't make it on Jello.

Raspberry people might be fine on Monday,
But you got to have yourself when it comes Sunday;
There's nothing to do then, they're all at Sunday School,
You have to be your own kind of fool.

Somebody asked me what I wanted to end up like:
I want to end up dead, but riding on my own bike.
It's touching, that might be so,
But I can't live on Jello.

You walk your own road, hitch-hike with yourself,
You get some Jello people, put them on your Jello shelf.
They make good decoration, something to talk about,
It's cheaper than buying books.

But I won't be nobody's little dog now,
I don't want to bark your way, maybe I want to end up
being a cow.
There should be an easy way to do it, I know,
But I don't want to be Jello.

You know, I'm just walking my own road,
I got four matchboxes, a pen, and a pet bird
That ran away yesterday, wasn't that a shame,
But it didn't want to be Jello neither.

Go your own way, make your own Sunday School,
Go to your own movies, be your own kind of fool;
I want to walk a road that I can't even see,
I don't even want to know what I mean.

When that bird talks to me, it doesn't matter,
Me and that bird make a foolish kind of chatter,
But it's us talking, I like it, the bird likes it, too;
You know, it kept me from being in that Jello stew.

Sparrow, when you come back, call me,
Now, take care.

Side I; Band 7. WHEN I DIE

Sandy: vocal and guitar
Jeanie: vocal and fiddle

Source: The Watson Family, Folkways FA2366.

Because I believe, and have found salvation,
When I die, (When I die), I'll live again;
That I may take part in the Jubilation,
When I die, (When I die), I'll live again.

CHORUS: When I die, (When I die), I'll live again, (I'll live
again),
Hallelujah, I'll live again.
Because I'm forgiven, my soul will find heaven,
When I die, (When I die), I'll live again, (I'll live
again).

The fear of the grave is removed forever;
When I die, (When I die), I'll live again;
My soul will rejoice by the crystal river;
When I die, (When I die), I'll live again. CHORUS.

Because to the Lord, I have made confession,
When I die, (When I die), I'll live again;
For now on my soul there is no transgression,
When I die, (When I die), I'll live again. CHORUS.

Side II; Band 1. POOR MAN, RICH MAN

Sandy: vocal and kazoo
Jeanie: vocal and guitar

Source: Dave McCarn

"Poor Man, Rich Man" typifies the protest songs found in mountain music. It describes and complains about how things are, but doesn't offer suggestions for improvement. Some people insist that such a song must also prescribe remedies. Some songs do, of course, and brilliantly, but I don't think they must in order to be good. Prescription is, mainly, a task for the politician, and not for the singer.

Let me tell you people somethin' that's true,
When you work in a mill, I'll tell you what you have to do:
You get up every mornin' before daylight,
You labor all day until it gets night,

You work a few days getting pale in the face
From a standin' so long in the same darn place,
Along comes the boss, hard as he can tear,
He wants you to think he's a grizzly bear;

CHORUS: Ashes to ashes, dust to dust,
Let the poor man live and the rich man bust.

When you go to dinner, you have to run
Or they'll blow the whistle before you're done;
Pay-day comes, you won't have a penny
When you've paid your bills, 'cause you got so many;
Sometimes you hear a racket like a pecker of wood;
It's only fellers tryin' to sell their goods.
The merchants, they are all just about gray
From studyin' how to get the poor man's pay; CHORUS.

Now some people run the mill man down,
But the cotton mill people make the world go 'round;
They take a little drink, they have a little fun;
When everythin' is finished, they rake up the mon'.
Now I left the mountains when I was a slip,
I never will forget that awful trip.
I walked all the way behind an apple wagon,
When I got to town, people, my pants was a-draggin'. CHORUS.

When winter-time comes there's hell to pay;
When you see the boss, you'll have to say,
"I need a load of wood, a ton of coal,
Take a dollar out a week or I'll go in the hole."
You'll have to buy your groceries at some chain store
'Cause you can't afford to pay anymore.
If you don't starve, I'm a son-of-a-gun
'Cause you can't buy beans without any mon'. CHORUS.

Side II; Band 2. GOLD WATCH AND CHAIN

Jeanie: lead vocal and guitar, harmony on chorus
Sandy: chorus and autoharp

This is a Carter Family song. There seemed to have been few straight love songs in old-time music. Men pushed girls in rivers or left town on trains, but they didn't usually sing directly to them until Country & Western and Bluegrass. Of the few out-and-out love songs in old-time music, most seem to have been done by the Carter Family. Maybe only women could get away, at that time, with such direct emotional appeals.

Darling, how can I stay here without you,
I have nothing to cheer my poor heart.
This old world would seem sad, love, without you,
Tell me now that we're never to part.

CHORUS: Oh, I'll pawn you my gold watch and chain, love,
And I'll pawn you my gold diamond ring.
I will pawn you this heart in my bosom,
Only say that you love me again.

Take back all the gifts you have given,
But a ring and a lock of your hair,
And a card with your picture upon it;
It's a face that is false, but is fair. CHORUS.

Tell me why you do not love me;
Tell me why that your smile is not bright.
Tell me why you have grown so cold-hearted;
Is there no kiss for me, love, tonight? CHORUS.

Side II; Band 3. THE LETTER THAT NEVER CAME

Jeanie: vocal and fiddle
Sandy: guitar
Joel Burkhart: banjo

Source: Charlie Poole and the North Carolina Ramblers.

The North Carolina Ramblers were one of the best of the string bands. Their importance has always been stressed by the New Lost City Ramblers. See especially their notes on the group in the NLCR songbook. Posey Rorer, the fiddler in Poole's group, has been Jeanie's favorite fiddler ever since she started playing.

"Is there any mail for me?" was the question that he asked
Of the postman at the dawning of the day;
But he turned away and sighed, while the tear stood in his
eye,
As he drooped his head and slowly walked away.

CHORUS: Was it from a gray-haired mother, or a sister or a
brother,
He waited all these many years in vain?
Oft from early morning light, he would wait till dark
at night
For the letter, but atlas, it never came.

As he waited all these years, joy mingled with his tears:
His poor soul had petered out with the tide;
In his hands he held a note, and here were the words he
wrote:
"If the letter comes, just place it by my side." CHORUS.

Side II; Band 4. COCAINE

Sandy: vocal and guitar

Source: Dick Justice

This song has a lot in common with "Subterranean Homesick Blues." It deals with the same subjects and treats them in the same rambling way. I couldn't make out certain words from the record, so I just filled in, but it's fairly close. I imagine that Dick Justice was white, but that he learned this song from a Negro source.

There are two main ways to like the song. The first is to snap your fingers and think it's swinging. That makes life easier for some people.

The second way is to listen to the words. What they mean. The references are quick, so nobody could make an exact case, but one way to put it is that the man got high to forget his troubles, and as he started easing up, he started talking about just what he was trying to forget. It's hard to be poor in a country that makes you feel there's something dirty about being poor. The furniture man seems to have known he'd be avoided if he came during work hours, so he came on Sunday morning and caught the man at home. You couldn't really be sure whether the man's wife was just off at church or had left for good and was the one who'd been paying the bills. Either way, the furniture's gone, and when it is, one thing you can do is sit on the floor and get high.

Go on, gal, don't you take me for no fool;
I ain't gonna quit you, pretty mama, while the weather's
cool.

Around the back door, honey, I'm gonna be,
Just as long as you bring me two and a half a week.

I got a girl, she works in the white folks' yard;
She brings me meal, I swear she brings me lard;
She brings me meal, honey, she brings me lard,
She brings me everything, honey, that a girl can steal.

A load of vaudeville circus riders come to town;
They had the chimp that looks so nice and brown.
They didn't know it was against the law
For the monkey to shop at the five cents store.
Well, jumped around the corner, just a minute too late,
Another one standing at the big back gate;
I'm simply wild about my good cocaine.

I stood my corner, hey, hey;
Here comes Sal with her nose all choked,
Doctor said she couldn't smell no more;
Lord, run, doctor, ring the bell,
The women in alley,
I'm simply wild about my good cocaine.

Furniture man came to my house, was last Sunday morn,
Asked me was my wife at home, I said she'd long been gone.
Backed his wagon up to my door, he took everything I had,
Carried it back to the furniture store; honey, I did
feel bad.

Now what in the world has any man got, messin' with a
furniture man,
Got no dough at the time to show, now they're takin' it
back in the van.
Takin' everything from a mess on a plate, from a skillet
to a fryin' pan.
If there ever was a devil without any horns, it must've
been a furniture man.

I hear you, mama, hey, hey;
Here comes Sal with her nose all choked,
Doctor said she couldn't smell no more;
Lord, go, doctor, ring the bell,
The women in alley,
I'm simply wild about my good cocaine.

Lord, the baby's in the cradle down in New Orleans,
The doctor kept whiffin' till the baby got mean.
Doctor whiffed till the baby got choked,
Mama said she couldn't smell no more;
Lord, go, doctor, ring the bell,
The women in alley,
I'm simply wild about my good cocaine.

I'm simply wild about my good cocaine.

Side II; Band 5. TROUBLIN' MIND

Sandy: lead voice and guitar
Jeanie: harmony and fiddle

Source: Old-Time Music at Clarence Ashley's, Folkways,
FA2355

Obviously we liked FA2355. And FA2359, too, for that
matter.

CHORUS: Troublin' mind, oh troublin' mind.
Troublin' mind, oh troublin' mind.
Troublin' mind, oh troublin' mind,
God's a-gonna ease my troublin' mind.

Mary and Martha, Peter and John (repeat twice),
They had troubles all night long. CHORUS.

Down by the graveyard, stood and talked (repeat twice),
There lay the long-legged as well as the short. CHORUS.

If you get there before I do (repeat twice),
You can tell my friends I'm a-comin', too. CHORUS.

Side II; Band 6. BURY ME NOT ON THE LONE PRAIRIE

Sandy: vocal, unaccompanied

Source: Vance Randolph, Ozark Folksongs.

This is a very American song. On the surface it is rank with sentiment. Underneath that, it is not mitigated by being "poetic": it's just empty and terrifying. A man asks for some consideration. His listeners note his concern without comment. They don't make a sound. He dies and they throw him in a hole. That's that. We have something we call the American Dream. This is its opposite number, the American Nightmare. It's always there, too, just around the corner. Don't run out of gas in Texas.

Oh, bury me not on the lone prairie,
These words came slow and mournfully
From the pallid lips of a youth who lay
On his cold, damp bed at the close of day.

He had dwelled in pain till o'er his brow
Death's shadows fast were gathering now.
He thought of his home and his loved ones nigh
As the cowboys gathered to see him die.

Oh, bury me not on the lone prairie
Where the coyotes will howl mournfully,
In a little grave just six by three,
Oh, bury me not on the lone prairie.

I've often been told before you die,
It matters not where the body lies,
Yet grant, oh grant this wish to me
And bury me not on the lone prairie.

In fancy I hear the well-known words
Of the wild, free wind and the song of the birds;
I think of the home and the cottage bower
And of friends I knew in my childhood hour.

Oh, bury me there, and after I die,
In the little churchyard on the green hillside;
By my father's grave there let mine be
And bury me not on the lone prairie.

Oh, bury me not, and his voice fell there,
But we paid no heed to his dying prayer;
In a narrow grave just six by three
We buried him there on the lone prairie.

Yes, we buried him there on the lone prairie,
Where the owl all night hoots mournfully,
Where the buzzard beats and the wind blows free
O'er the lonely grave on the lone prairie.

Side II; Band 7. LITTLE WILLIE

Jeanie: vocal and guitar
Sandy: banjo

We learned this song from Ken Frankel. He said Clarence
Ashley did it, but we've never heard it.

Two of the great qualities of American songs are their
subjectivity and their incompleteness. So often, as here, you
can't see the "story." Some people hate that; they like things
all spelled out. But this way, you get a chance to wonder.

When I was in my sixteenth year,
Little Willie he courted me.
He said if I'd go away with him
His little wife I'd be.

We was so very far from home
When Little Willie he said to me,
"Go home, go home, you dear little girl,
My wife you'll never be."

"My mother was so kind to me,
And I know she loved me dear.
You've brung me far away from home,
How can you leave me here?"

"It's nature, nature, my dear little girl,
Well, it's nature far too dear.
My mind it is to ramble through,
And I bid this life adieu."

Side II; Band 8. WHERE THE SOUL OF MAN NEVER DIES

Jeanie: lead
Sandy: bass line
Susie Blackmar: high harmony

Source: R. L. and Margie Harmon with Coot Greene, from
the record: Beech Mountain, North Carolina, Vol. II,
Folk-Legacy FSA-23.

After hearing a young English group, the Watsonsons of Hull, we started looking for American songs that were gapped and/or modal and that could be harmonized in ways outside the usual country manner without losing their traditional sound. Most of those we've found are religious songs, which often go well unaccompanied, and which tend to sound like shape-note hymns. This song appears to have been written in 1914 by William M. Dolden. It's since been recorded by the Blue Sky Boys, Wayne Rayney, Hank Williams, etc. Still, in this form, it has the old sound, especially with three voices.

Some people say they only sing what they feel, and that seems to mean that when they decide they're in a Barbara Allen mood, they sing Barbara Allen. We find that we feel a song while we're singing it, not before. We're not church-goers, but when we sing these hymns, we're religious. Intellectually that may seem a bit contradictory, but emotionally it's not, and we do the songs we do, finally, because we can feel them.

To Canaan's land, I'm on my way,
Where the soul of man never dies;
My darkest night will turn to day
Where the soul of man never dies.

CHORUS: Dear friends, there'll be no sad farewell,
There'll be no tear-dimmed eye,
Where all is peace and joy and love,
And the soul of man never dies.

A rose is blooming there for me
Where the soul of man never dies,
And I will spend eternity
Where the soul of man never dies. CHORUS.

A love light beams across the foam
Where the soul of man never dies;
It shines to light the shores of home,
Where the soul of man never dies. CHORUS.

My life will end in deathless sleep
Where the soul of man never dies,
And everlasting joy I'll reap
Where the soul of man never dies. CHORUS.

I'm on my way to that fair land
Where the soul of man never dies,
Where there will be no parting and
The soul of man never dies. CHORUS.

A lot of people helped us make this record. I guess what follows are called Acknowledgements.

First, Joel Burkhart. We met Joel in Paris in 1962 and started our street singing career with him. He's from Tulsa, is a sometimes aeronautical engineer, has a restored 1932 Ford, and is now studying journalism at the University of Oklahoma. He played banjo on "The Letter that Never Came" and mandolin on "Sweetheart, You Done Me Wrong" which will be on our Transatlantic record in Britain. Also, he loaned me his Mastertone for "Little Willie."

Susie Blackmar, who sang harmony on "Where the Soul of Man Never Dies," is Jeanie's sister. She sang quite a bit with us last summer. She plays autoharp and guitar, goes to college near Boston, is building a dulcimer, and is the best among us at finding good songs on a car radio.

Now, maybe some people can just get up and sing into a microphone and make a record that sounds like themselves, but we had to work ourselves up for every one of these sessions. That means that we rehearsed a bit, then I twitched in one room while Jeanie twitched in another, and finally we'd record a few songs. Sandy and Caroline Paton and Lee Haggerty put us up and put up with us all during this time. So did Walter and Mary Haggerty, Lee's brother and sister, who'd dropped in for what they thought would be a quiet vacation in the Vermont woods. We'd like to thank them all for standing it.

Howie Mitchell took the pictures. But the most important thing he did for us was to teach Joel and Jeanie and Susie how to fold paper animals, thereby keeping them more or less sane. There's a lot of paper animals lying around Vermont now.

Earlier in the summer, I bought a fretless banjo from Frank Proffitt. I didn't have anything ready to record with it, but whenever I got nervous I'd go off in a corner and play that banjo and sing, sometimes for a couple of hours, so that kept me more or less sane. I never was much at folding paper.

Dick Lourie, alias Richard, writes poetry and does social work on the Lower East Side in New York. He taught us the songs from Randolph and let me quote verses from his translation of "Le Bateau Ivre." I asked him to read the notes and make corrections, whereupon ensued a long series of arguments, discussions, wranglings and counter-wranglings as he gradually changed my Casey Stengel prose style into something nearing coherence. Between us, we tried to develop and clarify the essay that begins these notes. Jeanie and I had to catch a ship before it was finished, but Dick is still almost co-author.

After we'd returned to London, Jeanie and I finished the notes together. I wrote, and she made faces when I went wrong. Since I do most of our talking and writing, maybe I look like the leader. It's not so. We work together. I find it easier to be noisy in public, so I do most of the talking. She tunes the instruments, because she's got a better ear. We both find the songs and work out the arrangements. She transcribes or makes up all the harmonies.

Finally, we must not forget to thank old Mr. Bushmill and Mr. B. F. Eaters, who always came to our aid at dark moments.

Jeanie and I came back to the United States for three months last summer (1965) to take a look around, after having lived in Europe for three years. We felt like tourists who had visited an exotic planet and found themselves strangely familiar with it without knowing why, as though the whole time were a dream. We liked some things intensely, too intensely for everyday life: friends, country people, country music, the land, and the Lower East Side in New York (for me, since I'd been at home there for four years once). The rest we hated, and were ashamed of ourselves for that, because hatred is only a kind of fear. There was no in-between, no time to savor what we liked and to ignore what we didn't. We wish there had been. But we were on the move and it was a long time between the good things, and they were so brief and usually unexpected that we were constantly overwhelmed when we met them. The world we hated was, of course, that famous one in which all Americans are supposed to live, but don't, the world that is celebrated weekly in Life Magazine. During certain strange moments, all that we liked and all that we didn't like about America seemed to fit together all around us, all kaleidoscoped together or crunched into a shiny ball of junk like that smashed car in Goldfinger. Fortunately, such awareness came only at those rare times we were calm enough to brood, such as just before falling asleep, so we stood it, barely. We'll come over again next summer and see how it goes then.

Sandy Darlington

