

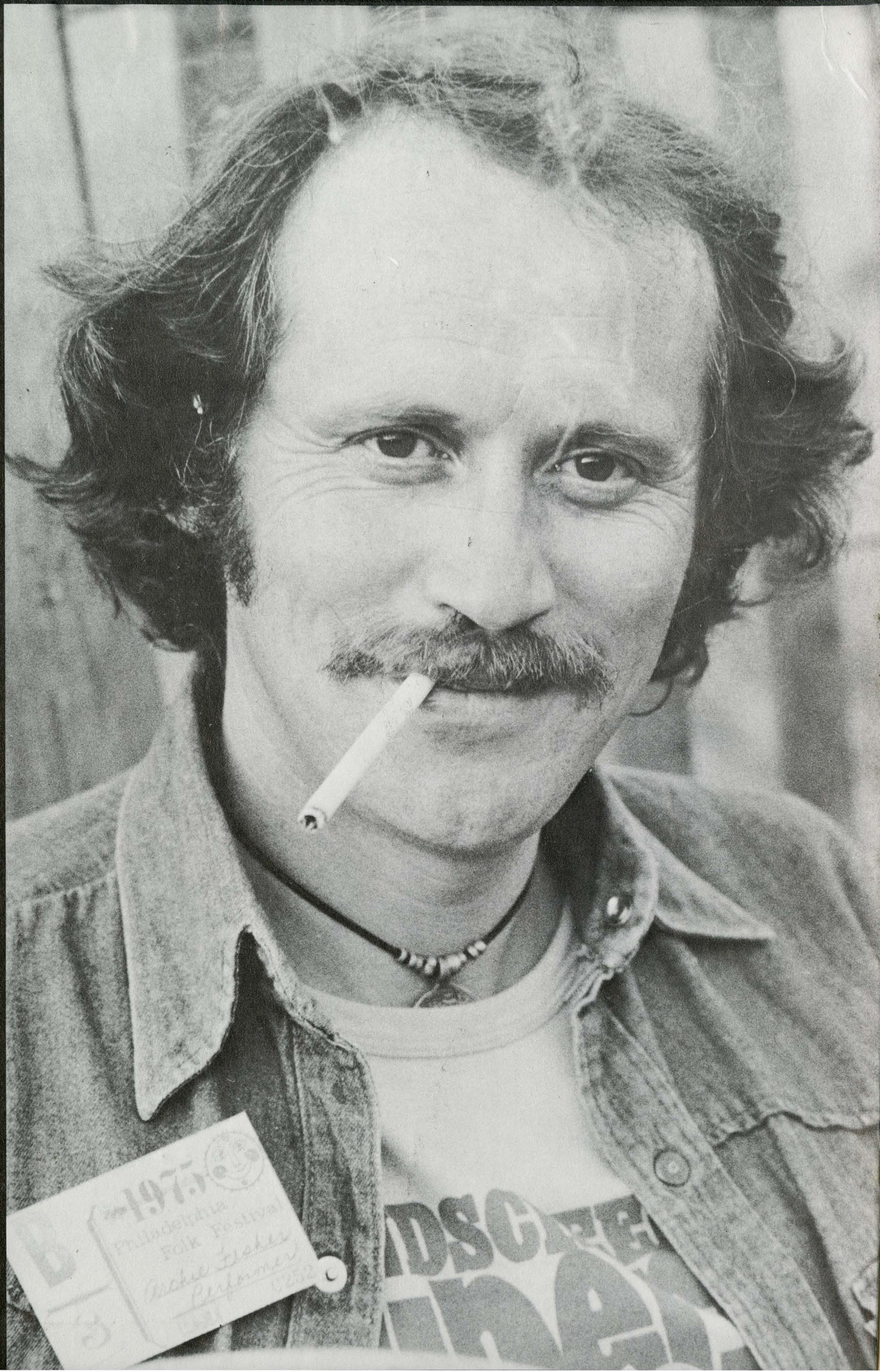
FSS-61

"The Man With A Rhyme"

ARCHIE FISHER



FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS, INC.



"The Man With A Rhyme"

ARCHIE FISHER

Recorded by Sandy Paton

Notes by Archie Fisher

Archie Fisher exemplifies all that is good about the folksong revival. His deep respect for the older musical traditions of his native Scotland enables him to approach them creatively; his understanding of those traditions is such that he has been able to compose a new ballad ("The Witch of the West-mer-lands") that could easily assume a place among the classic ballads compiled by Francis James Child during the last century.

A superbly inventive guitarist, Archie's accompaniments are always appropriate to the song: never distorting it, never overwhelming it. Whether it be a rich underscoring of the original air or an exquisite counter-melody reflecting and complementing it, there is a satisfying sense of "rightness" in all of Archie's arrangements.

His singing can be warm and tender — gentle, without sacrificing the strength that has sustained the tradition for so many centuries. Archie is a sophisticated person, yet he is able to approach the sentimental without self-consciousness. One is always reluctant to use the rather indefinable term "charisma", but there is a quality about this young man that invites such a description. Perhaps it is a combination of the kind, of sensitivity that creates in him an unusual empathy, lending depth to his artistry, and a rare measure of native Celtic charm. Whatever it is, it is certain that you will sense it, too, as you listen to this, his first American album.

*Sandy Paton
June, 1976*

Side 1

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Sharon, Connecticut 06069

cover photo by David Gahr

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THE
MAN
WITH
A
RHYME



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SHARON, CONNECTICUT 06069

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"The Man With a Rhyme"

Although I was born an urban Scot in the city of Glasgow, I had two advantages in my parents being an island mother who still breaks into song as often as the blackbird and a father who had a repertoire that ranged from ballad fragments and music-hall song to his first love — opera.

To say that my six sisters acted as a catchment area for fellow musicians would not be far from the truth, but most of all, they acted as my private audience, and I sang for them before I had the courage to play before others.

The songs I sing are my interpretations of other singers' inspirations. Seldom have I taken a song from the cold page; they tend to come more from a warm heart. Now they are as much yours as they were ever mine.

My thanks for their care and dedication go to (my new sisters) "The Ladies of the Lake": Wendy, Kathy, Lani and Annie, and also to Lorraine Lee, whom I think I must have met in another life somewhere. From now on, there will always be an empty space when I play the music they helped me to record. My love to the whole Paton household, and a special thank you to Kathy Henderson of London for her etching which gave me the title for the album.

Archie Fisher

THE SONGS:

Side 1, Band 1. TWA BONNIE MAIDENS

Part of a longer and rather flowery song about the flight to Skye of Bonnie Prince Charlie after the Jacobite defeat at Culloden, when, disguised as an old woman, the Young Pretender and Flora MacDonald deceived the redcoat sentries. The air is also known as Planxty George Brabazon.

*There were twa bonnie maidens and three bonnie maidens
Cam' ower the Minch and cam' ower the main,
Wi' the wind for their way and the corrie for their hame,
They are dearly welcome to Skye again.*

Come along, come along, wi' yer boatie and yer song,
To my hey, bonnie maidens, my twa bonnie maids,
For the nicht it is dark and the redcoat is gone
And you're dearly welcome to Skye again.

There is Flora, my honey, so neat and so bonnie,
And one that is tall and handsome withall.
Put one for my queen and the other for my king
And they're dearly welcome to Skye again.

There's a wind in the tree and a ship on the sea,
To my hey, bonnie maidens, my twa bonnie maids,
By the sea mullèt's nest I will watchower the main
And you're dearly welcome to Skye again.

Side 1, Band 2. WELCOME ROYAL CHARLIE

I have a soft spot for the Chief Lochiel mentioned in this song, for the story goes that he talked Prince Charlie out of ransacking my native city of Glasgow when its burghers refused to supply the retreating Jacobite army with shoes and supplies. Charlie was not always as welcome in some places as this song implies. If he had been, the result of the '45 rebellion might have been very different.

The prince who should oor king hae been,
He wore the royal red and green.
A bonnier lad was never seen
Than oor brave royal Charlie.

Oh, ye've been lang a-comin',
Lang, lang, lang a-comin'.
Oh, ye've been lang a-comin';
Welcome royal Charlie.

Since oor true king was sent awa',
A doited German rules us a', (foolish, childish)
And we are forced against the law,
For the right belongs to Charlie.

We daurna brew a peck o' malt (dare not)
Or German Geordie finds a fault,
And for oor kail we'd scarce get salt,
For the want o' royal Charlie.

When Charlie in the heilan' shiel (highland cottage)
Forgathered wi' the great Lochiel,
Oh, what kindness did prevail
Atween the chief and Charlie.

At Falkirk and at Prestonpans,
Supported by oor heilan' clans,
We broke the Hanoverian bands;
The right belongs to Charlie.

(repeat first verse)

Side 1, Band 3. DARK EYED MOLLY

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The compatibility of unrequited love and strong drink has been the theme of many a traditional song. Speaking from experience, it doesn't help in the long run, but think of the songs we'd miss without the experiment. The melody is that of a Basque lullaby and the words are my reconstruction from a line or two of Gaelic poetry.

Deep and dark are my true love's eyes,
Blacker still is the winter turning,
As the sadness of parting proves.
And brighter now is the lantern burning
That lightens my path to love.

No fiddle tune will take the air,
But I will see her swift feet advancing
And the swirl of her long brown hair,
Her smiling face and her dark eyes glancing
As we stepped out "Blinkbonny Fair."

And if my waiting prove in vain,
Then I will pack and track ever take me.
The long road will ease my pain.
No gem of womankind will make me
E'er whisper love's words again.

For in drink I'll seek good company,
My ears will ring with the tavern's laughter,
And I'll hear not her last sweet sighs.
Then who's to know in the morning after
That I long for her dear dark eyes?

Side 1, Band 4. QUEEN AMANG THE HEATHER

A version of "Skippin' Barefoot Through the Heather" that I learned from Belle Stewart. Each variant of this song has its own charm in melody and text.

As I roved out one fine summer's morn
Among lofty hills, moorlands and mountains,
It was there I spied a weel faur'd maid (well favored)
As I wi' others was out a-huntin'.

No shoes nor stockings did she wear,
And neither had she cap nor feather,
But her golden hair hung in ringlets fair
And the gentle breeze blew 'round her shoulder.

I said, "Braw lassie, why roam your lane, (alone)
Why roam your lane amang the heather?"
She said, "My faither's awa' frae hame
And I'm herdin' a' his yowes thegither." (ewes together)

I said, "Braw lassie, if ye'll be mine
And care to lie on a bed of feather,
In silks and satins you will shine
And you'll be my queen amang the heather."

She said, "Kind sir, your offer's good,
But I'm afraid it was meant for laughter,
For I see you are some rich squire's son
And I am but a poor shepherd's daughter.

"But had ye been a shepherd loon (lad)
A-herdin' yowes in yonder valley,
Or had ye been some ploughman's son,
Wi' a' my heart I could hae lo'ed ye." (loved)

Now, I've been to halls and I've been to balls,
I've been to London and Balquidder,
But the bonniest lass that e'er I saw
She was herdin' yowes amang the heather.

So we both sat down upon the plain,
We sat awhile and we talked thegither,
And we left the yowes to stray their lane
Till I lo'ed my queen amang the heather.

Side 1, Band 5. JOCK STEWART

An Irish narrative ballad that has been shortened to an Aberdeenshire drinking song. Though I've searched the map of Eire in vain for a "River Kildare," and changed verse three so that the dog doesn't get shot, the song is essentially still Jeannie Robertson's version heard many years ago and re-inspired by the singing of her daughter, Lizzie Higgins.

Now, my name is Jock Stewart,
I'm a canny gaun man, (cautiously going, casual)
And a roving young fellow I've been.
So be easy and free
When you're drinkin' wi' me.
I'm a man you don't meet every day.

I have acres of land,
I have men at command,
I have always a shilling to spare.

Now, I took out my gun,
With my dog I did shoot
All down by the River Kildare.

So, come fill up your glasses
Of brandy and wine,
And whatever the cost, I will pay.

Side 1, Band 6. THE WITCH OF THE WEST-MER-LANDS

Copyright 1976, Ard-Ri Music, Dublin

I have borrowed, for this song, the form of the narrative ballad. The ingredients are a mixture of legend, superstition, and ballad themes brought into focus by the work of the Lakeland painter, Joni Turner. As far as I know, the female centaur is not a creature of mythology, and this role of witch disguise was suggested by the tales of antlered women with bodies of deer seen wading in the shallows of the lakes in the moonlight. There are many pleasant and hospitable inns in the Lake District.

Pale was the wounded knight
That bore the rowan shield (mountain ash, credited with
Loud and cruel were the raven's cries /protective qualities)
That feasted on the field, saying:

"Beck water, cold and clear, (brook)
Will never clean your wound.
There's none but the Maid of the Winding mere
Can make thee hale and soond." (old name
for Lake Windermere)

"So course well, my brindled hounds,
And fetch me the mountain hare
Whose coat is as grey as the Wastwater (a scree covered
Or as white as the lily fair," who said: /Lakeland Fell)

"Green moss and heather bands
Will never staunch the flood.
There's none but the Witch of the West-mer-lands
Can save thy dear life's blood."

"So turn, turn your stallion's head
Till his red mane flies in the wind
And the rider of the moon goes by
And the bright star falls behind."

And clear was the pale moon
When his shadow passed him by;
Below the hill was the brightest star
When he heard the houlet cry, saying: (owl)

"Why do you ride this way,
And wharfore cam' ye here?" (why)
"I seek the Witch of the West-mer-lands
That dwells by the winding mere."

"Then fly free your good grey hawk
To gather the golden rod, (herb said to arrest bleeding,
And face your horse into the clouds
Above yon gay green wood."

And it's weary by Ullswater
And the misty brake fern way (bracken)
Till through the cleft o' the Kirkstane Pass
The winding water lay.

He said, "Lie down, my brindled hound,
And rest my good grey hawk,
And thee, my steed, may graze they fill,
For I must dismount and walk.

"But come when you hear my horn
And answer swift the call,
For I fear e'er the sun shall rise this morn
You will serve me best of all."

And down to the water's brim
He's borne the rowan shield,
And the golden rod he has cast in
To see what the lake might yield.

And wet rose she from the lake,
And fast and fleet gaed she, (went)
One half the form of a maiden fair
With a jet black mare's body.

And loud, long and shrill he blew
And his steed was by his side;
High overhead his grey hawk flew
And swiftly he did ride, saying:

"Course well, my brindled hounds,
And fetch me the jet black mare.
Stoop and strike, my good grey hawk,
And bring me the maiden fair." She said:

"Pray sheath thy silvery sword,
Lay down thy rowan shield,
For I see by the briny blood that flows
You've been wounded in the field."

And she stood in a gown of the velvet blue,
Bound 'round with a silver chain.
She's kissed his pale lips aince and twice
And three times 'round again.

And she's bound his wound with the golden rod;
Full fast in her arms he lay,
And he has risen hale and soond (sound)
Wi' the sun high in the day. She said:

"Ride with your brindled hounds at heel
And your good grey hawk in hand.
There's nane can harm a knight wha's lain
With the Witch of the West-mer-land."

Side 1, Band 7. THE ECHO MOCKS THE CORNCRAKE

An Ayrshire love song that has more of the drawing room about it than the tradition. Unclaimed by Burns, the melody more than justifies its place in the Scottish folksinger's repertoire. I borrowed it from Geordie Hamilton of Edinburgh.

The lass that I loved first of all
Was handsome, young and fair.
Wi' her I spent so mony a nicht
Doon by the banks o' Ayr.
Wi' her I spent so mony a nicht
Where scented clover grows
And the echo mocks the cornerake
Amang yon whinny-knowes. (furze clad knolls)

We loved each other dearly
And disputes we seldom had.
As constant as the pendulum,
Our hearts beat ever glad.
We sought for joy and found it
Where yon wee burnie rows, (small stream runs)
And the echo mocks the cornerake
Amang yon whinny-knowes.

Ye ladies fair and pleasure dames
 Drive tae the banks o' Doune.
 Ye dearly pay yer every cent
 Tae barbers for perfume.
 But rural joys are free for all
 Where scented clover grows,
 And the echo mocks the corncrake
 Amang yon whinny-knowes.

The corncrake is noo awa' (now away)
 And the bank is tae the brim.
 The whinny-knowes are capped wi' snaw (snow)
 Tae tap the highest whin. (furze, spiny evergreen
 But when cold winter is awa' shrub)
 And summers pierce the sky,
 We'll welcome back the corncrake,
 The bird of rural joy.

Side 2, Band 1. WESTERN ISLAND

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A combination of partially fulfilled pipedreams. There's
 still time...

I came to a western island;
 As far as a man can walk is my land.
 I cleared ten acres and a house I built
 Into the side of the hill.

The roof leaks, the windows rattle,
 And the grass in the high ground won't feed cattle;
 The west wind blowin' off the sea
 Makes it hard to grow a tree.

I've one cow in a lean-to byre,
 A spring close by and a driftwood fire,
 A clear view of the setting sun
 And a twelve gauge hammer-gun.

I keep sheep and fish deep water
 In a high-bowed boat called the 'Neptune's Daughter.'
 She'll ride any western gale
 And can carry a attack of sail.

Some nights, when the bright lights flicker,
 I sail to the mainland for my liquor.
 Haven't got a woman to call my own,
 But I never wake up alone.

*A man needs to feel the ground
And the wind to tell him that the world spins around;
To watch the stars and taste the sea,
And a woman to keep him free.*

*I came to a western island;
As far as a man can walk is my land.
I cleared ten acres and a house I built
Into the side of the hill.*

Side 2, Band 2. UPSTAIRS AND DOWNSTAIRS

A song that puts very succinctly the penalties and shame incurred from the sowing of wild oats. Most versions, including this one, are from the Herd manuscripts.

*As I cam' in by Fisherrow,
Musselburgh was near me.
I threw off my mussel pack
And courted wi' my dearie.*

*Upstairs, downstairs,
Timmer stairs fears me; (the pillory)
I thocht it wrang tae lie my lane (alone)
When I'm sae near my dearie.*

*Noo, had her apron bidden doon (stayed down)
The kirk would ne'er a-ken't it, (church, known it)
But now the news gaes through the toon;
I fear I canna mend it.*

*And she maun tak' the cutty stool (repentance chair)
And I maun tak' the pillor',
And that's the way the poor folks dae,
Because they hae nae siller. (silver)*

Side 2, Band 3. MOUNT AND GO

The Greig manuscript gave us one of the few songs where the woman comes off the better. In this case, she escapes from a fixed marriage with a rich sea Captain, apparently taking his ship as well as his gold.

*My parents married me ower young
To an auld carle baith bald and dumb.
His love was done and mine new sprung,
So I'll fly the plains wi' my laddie-0.*

Come, bonnie laddie, mount and go,
Hey, bonnie laddie, mount and go,
Come, bonnie laddie, mount and go;
Mount and I'll gang wi' you, oh. (go)

But I would leave my guid peat stack, (burning turf)
And so would I my guid kailyard,
So would I my auld bald laird (lord)
To fly the plains wi' my laddie-0.

And when the auld carle lay fast asleep,
Out of his airms she did quickly creep,
And the keys o' the cabin she did keep,
And she's flown the plains wi' her laddie-0.

The auld carle wakened in the ha';
The sheets were cold and she was awa'.
Wi' the weight o' hersel' in goud and a' (gold)
She's flown the plains wi' her laddie-0.

"It's ye'll gang doon tae yon seashore
And ye'll see a ship where she was afore;
Ye'll speir at the skipper if she's been there, (inquire of)
Or if any of his sailors saw her, oh."

And as she sailed out ower yon lea,
She drank a toast right merrily.
She's thrown the wine glass intae the sea,
For joy she has found wi' her laddie-0.

When she landed ower yon lea,
She was lady o' fifty ploughs and three,
Lady o' fifty ploughs and three
And she dearly lo'es her laddie-0.

Side 2, Band 4. THE WOUNDED WHALE

Collated from two versions in Gale Huntington's *Songs the Whalermen Sang*, taken from the logs of the *Maria* (1846) and the *Uncas* (1843). The melody is a filleted, Dundee-influenced hybrid.

The song first came to my notice when I was browsing through Albe Dawson's library. I was very moved by the detailed and compassionate description of the kill, and borrowed the book so that I could just let the song sink in slowly over a period of time. Forgive the "lump in my throat" style of singing over the last few verses.

Lo, as the sun from her ocean bed was rising,
Broad on the water her glittering light throws,
Hark, from the masthead our lookouts are crying:
'Tis hard on your lee beam, a whale, there she blows!

Call up your sleepers, your larboard and starboardmen;
Main yard aback and your boats clear away,
For hard on our lee beam see the white water gleam,
Glittering and foaming in glorious array.

See the Leviathan in vastness is lying,
Making the ocean her sumptuous bed,
While high overhead the sea birds are flying,
Combing the billows that break o'er her head.

High, wide and swimming, her dark flukes are flying;
Stately, but slowly, she sinks in the main.
Peak all your oars awhile, rest from your weary toil,
Watching and waiting her rising again.

Row, hearties, row for the pride of your nation;
Spring to your oars, let the reeking sweat flow!
Now for the blood, let it have circulation,
Forward on your thwarts, give away all you know.

See how the boats advance, gaily, as to a dance,
Floating like feathers over the dark blue sea.
Stand up and give her some, send both your irons home.
Stern off and trim your boat; we are all clear.

Wounded and sore, fins and flukes in commotion,
Blackskin and oars contending the spray
While loud, long and shrill blows the horn of the ocean.
Fretting and lost, she brings to in dismay.

Haul line, every man, and gather in all you can.
Lances and spades from your thwarts clear away.
Now peak your oars again while fast each boat remains,
For safely and surely, we hold her at bay.

Surrounded by foes, with strength undiminished,
Heed how she flashes her dark flukes in the air!
A lance in the life, and the struggle is finished;
See how she sinks with her chimney on fire.

While so loud and shrill are the cries from our seamen,
Mocking the whale in her terrible hour.
Watch her as she dies; see, the blue signal flies.
Here she goes, "fin out." The contest is o'er.

Side 2, Band 5. THE CRUEL BROTHER

Learned from the singing of a fine, young Aberdeenshire fiddler called Tam Spiers. This version was collated for me by Duncan McLellan of Inverness. It is mainly from Child 11, version C, with additions from other versions.

There were three sisters lived in a ha',
Hech, hey, and the lily gay,
By cam' a knicht and he wooed them a',
And the rose is aye the redder aye.

And the first ane she was dressed in green.
"Would ye fancy me and be my queen?"

And the second ane she was dressed in yellow.
"Would ye fancy me and be my marrow?" (mate)

And the third ane she was dressed in red.
"Would ye fancy me and be my bride?"

"Ye may seek me frae my faither dear,
And from my mither wha did me bear.

"Ye may seek me frae my sister Anne,
And dinna forget my brither John."

And he socht her frae her faither, the king,
And he socht her frae her mither, the queen.

And he socht her frae her sister Anne,
But forgot tae speir at her brither John. (inquire of)

And her mither dressed her in her gown,
And her sister tied the flounces 'round.

Her faither mounted her on her horse,
And her brither led her doon the close. (courtyard)

He's ta'en a knife baith lang and sharp,
And he's pierced the bonnie bride through the heart.

"Oh, lead me, lead me up yon hill,
And there I'll sit and mak' my will."

"What will ye leave tae your faither dear?"
"The bonny white steed that brocht me here."

"And what will ye leave tae your mither dear?"
"The bloody robes that I do wear."

"And what will ye leave tae your sister Anne?"

"The gowden ring frae off my hand."

"And what will ye leave tae your brither John?"

"The gallows tree for tae hang him on."

Side 2, Band 6. COSHIEVILLE (Copyright, S. MacGregor)

Stewart MacGregor was a poet, songwriter and novelist, and no mean singer and raconteur. He was there at the "beginning" in Edinburgh. His poetry was deeply rooted in our folksong, and the transition to songwriting enriched the repertoires of his friends and, as time has shown, the music and literature of the country he so dearly loved.

Coshieville is a hamlet not far from Aberfeldy which is known as "the Gateway to the Highlands." The song is set in the time of the building of our hydro-electric dams, an era that changed many parts of the West Highlands and the hearts of some of the girls the workers left behind.

*The west winds blow to Coshieville,
And with the winds came we,
And where the river hugs the wood
And blackthorns bloom in May, there stood
A single rowan tree,
So young and tender — so were you;
I loved you both as there you grew
The day I took the road that leads
By Rannoch to the sea.*

*We carved our names in Coshieville;
The rowan leaves were still.
But the darkening West was in your eyes
Despite your kisses and my lies,
My thoughts had crossed the hill.
I broke your heart as the minutes passed,
For I shrugged and said that nothing lasts,
But many's the backwards glance I cast
As I went north to the drill.*

*The big wheels rumble up and down,
The lorries know the way. (trucks)
I waved my hand, I hitched a ride;
We crossed the bridge at Rannochside
Where the diesel motors play.
Then I set myself to a cliff of stone,
My ears to the boring hammer's drone,
And the ache inside I rued alone,
For you were far away.*

But the money moved from Erich's Loch
And the Great Glen beckoned on.
At Norriston the hills grew pale,
And we fought and drank through old Kintail
Till our money soon was gone.
Then I cursed Loch Awe'side's autumn rain
And the winter whisky in Dunblane
Till the west winds rose in the spring again
And my heart leapt at its song.

And I came at night to Coshieville,
With a dozen hills aflame.
You had another hand to hold;
Beneath the names we carved of old
There was another name.
You looked me through; you made no sign.
I drank the cup of bitter wine,
For well we knew the fault was mine.
And I went the road I came.

Side 2, Band 7. SOUTH WIND

Composed by Donal O'Sullivan from the translation of the song by "a native of Irrul, County Mayo, named Domhnall Meirgeach Mac Con Mara (Freckled Donal Macnamara)" and published in O'Sullivan's *Songs of the Irish* (Crown, New York, 1960).

Someone once told me that a singer remembers his last performance of the song, rather than the learned version. This is my only excuse for the odd variations in word and note. The printed text can be found in O'Sullivan's book, where Sean Cannon started the whole process.

South wind of the gentle rain,
You banish winter weather,
Bring salmon to the pool again,
The bees among the heather.
If Northwards now you mean to blow,
As you rustle soft above me,
Godspeed be with you as you go,
With a kiss for those that love me.

From south I come with velvet breeze;
My word all nature blesses.
I melt the snow and strew the leaves
With flowers and soft caresses.
I'll help you to dispel your woes,
With joy, I'll take your greeting
And bear it to your loved Mayo
Upon my wings so fleeting.

My Connacht, famed for wine and play,
 So leal, so gay, so loving, (loyal)
 Here's my fond kiss I send today
 Borne on the wind in its roving.
 These Munster folk are good and kind;
 Right royally they treat me.
 But this land I'll gladly leave behind,
 With your Connacht pipes to greet me.

CREDITS:

Wendy Grossman: concertina, banjo, dulcimer
 Kathy Westra: 'cello
 Lani Herrmann: fiddle
 Annie Mayo Muir: flute

Lorraine Lee: magic dulcimer on "The Witch of the West-
 mer-lands" and "South Wind."

Kathy Henderson made the etching used on the cover of
 the booklet.

The fanciful emblem of the "Ladies of the Lake" was
 drawn by Anne Herrmann, with lettering by Lani
 Herrmann.

