FSI-65

Dark Ships in the Forest

Ballads of the Supernatural

John Roberts & Tony Barrand

with Fred Breunig & Steve Woodruff

FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS, INC.

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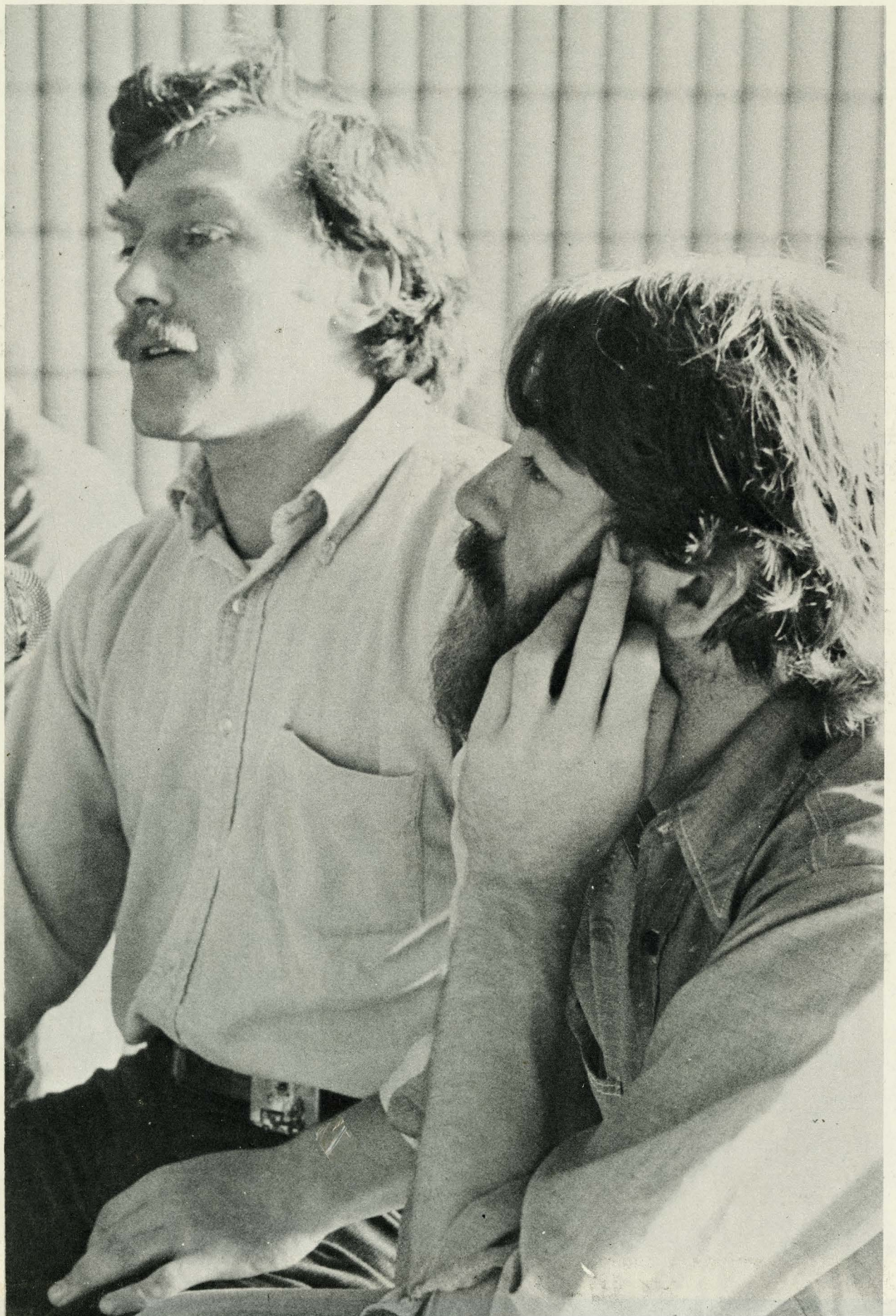

As children, we are as familiar with the story-world of elves, giants, witches and ghosts as we are with the world of reality around us. This kind of fantasy plays a major role in our growing up, but as we mature it seems to get shuttled further and further into the backs of our minds, closeted up, to be released only for the occasional entertainment of our own children.

But it is precisely this variety of fantasy which provided a major part of the entertainment of days gone by. Songs and tales, carried in a family tradition intermittently refreshed by itinerant musicians and raconteurs, were full of bizarre encounters between young men and water nymphs, knights and dragons, fairy queens and magicians; and many of these same ballads, as song or story, have been carried down to us through the same family traditions.

The songs we sing here were born of this stock. Because of our biases, they are based on English or English-derived tradition, or are English in style or spirit (as it were). Many of them are filled unashamedly with the fantastical events of the balladry of yesteryear; others carry only faint indications of some long-gone past, of unnatural happenings, of pagan ritual, and of disconcerting power. In the primal forest of folk songs, these are our dark ships.

John and Tony

Side 1

OAK, ASH, AND THORN *(Kipling/ Bellamy)*	2:36
THE BROOMFIELD WAGER *(Child 43)*	4:11
THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL *(Child 79)*	2:43
TOM OF BEDLAM	3:57
THE DREADFUL GHOST	4:18
THE FOGGY DEW	5:06

Side 2

THE DERBY RAM	3:27
THE MAID ON THE SHORE *(cf. Child 43)*	3:41
REYNARDINE	3:01
THE FALSE LADY *(Child 68)*	3:21
POLLY VAUGHN	3:18
THE TWO MAGICIANS *(Child 44/ A.L. Lloyd)*	5:19

Descriptive notes and lyrics in enclosed booklet.

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Back cover photograph by David Arsenault

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SHARON, CONNECTICUT 06069

As children, we are as familiar with the story-world of elves, giants, witches, and ghosts as we are with the world of the reality around us. This kind of fantasy plays a major role in our growing up, but as we mature it seems to get shuttled further and further into the backs of our minds, closeted up, to be released only for the occasional entertainment of our own children.

But it is precisely this variety of fantasy which provided a major part of the entertainment of days gone by. Songs and tales, carried in a family tradition intermittently refreshed by itinerant musicians and raconteurs, were full of bizarre encounters between young men and water nymphs, knights and dragons, fairy queens and magicians; and many of these same ballads, as song or story, have been carried down to us through the same family traditions.

Why were these themes so popular? In a world of oppression and misery, the adventure world of heroic knights and distressed damsels offered some brief escape. And in the world of the inquisition, of the continuing struggle between God and Satan, the shining white and the murky black, with the might of the church pitted against the insidious powers of witchcraft, it would seem natural to spice these adventures with the incarnations of supra-terrestrial forces.

But changing times lead to changing ballads. King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table give way to Robin Hood and his merrie band of outlaws. Regal seductions make room for romps in the hayloft. Contemporary events are celebrated in new ballads, which take pride of place in the family repertoire. Many of the older songs are forgotten, or changed beyond recognition; but they are not all lost.

Old motifs, like old soldiers, seldom die; they live on in the new ballads and in adaptations of the old, altered, perhaps, but never really forgotten. Occasionally they appear in full glory in a miraculously preserved saga of ancient intrigue, perhaps remaining almost unchanged over the centuries. They may just come as fleeting allusions, shadows of the past ill at ease in their new settings. Sometimes (particularly, it seems, in their migration across the Atlantic) they disappear, leaving stark, grim tales of unexplained death, murder, and tragedy. And at times, it seems, they serve only to muddle an apparently rational sequence of events. But they remain with us, in many cases the same supernatural elements common to our children's fairy tales: the ghosts, wizards, talking birds, shape transformations, and miracles of a magical world of long ago.

The songs we sing here were born of this stock. Because of our biases, they are based on English or English-derived tradition, or are English in style or spirit (as it were). Many of them are filled unashamedly with the fantastical events of the balladry of yesteryear; others carry only faint indications of some long-gone past, of unnatural happenings, of pagan ritual, and of disconcerting power. In the primal forest of folk songs, these are our dark ships.

John Roberts

March 1977

Side 1, Band 1

Oak, Ash, and Thorn

Rudyard Kipling's "A Tree Song" sets the scene for the stories and poems of *Puck of Pook's Hill*. This setting of the verses is by Peter Bellamy of Norwich, who, since the breakup of the Young Tradition, has become one of Britain's best-known exponents of traditional song. He has arranged a considerable number of Kipling's "songs," using original melodies or adapting traditional ones. This tune is his own.

We also use it as a scene-setter, a "calling-on song." The magic of trees lies deep in the roots of Druidic religion and mythology, and the oak, ash, and thorn are central characters of the bardic tree-alphabets; much of this tree lore has survived in folk tales, in English as well as in Celtic tradition.

Of all the trees that grow so fair,
old England to adorn,
Greater are none beneath the sun
than Oak, and Ash, and Thorn:

Sing Oak, and Ash, and Thorn,
good sirs,
All on a midsummer's morn,
Surely we sing of no little thing
In Oak, and Ash, and Thorn.

Oak of the clay lived many a day
o'er ever Aeneas began,
Ash of the loam was a lady at home
when Brut was an outlaw man,
And Thorn of the down saw new Troy town,
from which was London born,
Witness hereby the ancient try
of Oak, and Ash, and Thorn.

Yew that is old, in churchyard mould,
he breedeth a mighty bow,
Alder for shoes do wise men choose,
and Beech for cups also,
But when you have killed, and your
bowl it is filled, and your shoes
are clean outworn,
Back you must speed for all that you
need to Oak, and Ash, and Thorn.

Elm, she hates mankind, and waits
till every gust be laid,
To drop a limb on the head of him
that anyway trusts her shade,
But whether a lad be sober or sad,
or mellow with ale from the horn,
He'll take no wrong when he lyeth along
'neath Oak, and Ash, and Thorn.

Oh, do not tell the priest our plight,
or he would call it a sin,
But we've been out in the woods all
night, a-conjuring summer in,
And we bring you good news by word of
mouth, good news for cattle and corn:
Now is the sun come up from the south,
by Oak, and Ash, and Thorn.

Side 1, Band 2

The Broomfield Wager *(Child 43)*

Cyril Poacher, our source for this "pub" version of a most venerable ballad, was a regular at the Saturday night sing-songs in The Ship Inn, at Blaxhall in Suffolk. The somewhat garbled nature of the story line is heightened by the mysterious "Hold the wheel" chorus, apparently the result of a misunderstanding of "had his will" by a visiting (and presumably inebriated) yachtsman. It stuck.

O wager, O wager, O wager I'll lay you,
I'll lay you five thousands to your one
That a maiden I will go to the merry
broom field
And a maiden I'm sure I will return.
That a maiden I will go to the merry
broom field
And a maiden I'm sure I will return
— Hold the Wheel!

And then did this young maid get on a
bay hobby's back,
All for to ride to that green broom
(that green broom),
And when she got there, she found her
own true love
Lying in that merry green broom fast
asleep.

Nine times did she walk round the
crown of his head,
Nine times round the soles of his feet,
Nine times did she say, "Awake, master,
For your own true love is standing
nearby."

And when she had done all that she dare do,
She stepped behind that bunch of green broom (that green broom)
All for to hear what her own true love would say
When he awoke out of his domestic sleep.

He said, "If I'd been awake instead of being asleep,
My will I would have done toward thee,
Your blood, it would have been spilled for those small birds to drink,
And your flesh it would have been for their food."

"You hard-hearted young man, how could you say so?
Your heart it must be hard as any stone,
For to murder the one that loved you so well
Far better than the ground that you stand on.

"Nine times of this bell did I ring, master,
Nine times of this whip did I crack,
Nine times did I say, 'Awake, master,
For your own true love is standing nearby.'"

Side 1, Band 3

The Wife of Usher's Well *(Child 79)*

Scotland would seem to be the birthplace of this ballad, though, in common with many other of the ballads ennobled by their inclusion in the Child canon, it has flourished better on this side of the Atlantic, particularly in the Appalachians. Bronson lists two English variants; ours was transcribed by Ralph Vaughan Williams from a phonograph recording of a Mrs. Loveridge of Dilwyn. Not only do the children return from the dead, but we have the extra supernatural element, more proper to the religious piece "The Carnal and the Crane," of the roasted cock crowing in the serving platter.

There lived a lady in merry Scotland,
And she had sons all three,
And she sent them away into merry England,
To learn some English deeds.

They had not been in merry England
For twelve months and one day,
When the news came back to their own mother dear,
Their bodies were in cold clay.

I will not believe in God, she said,
Nor Christ in eternity,
Till They send me back my own three sons,
The same as they went from me.

Old Christmas time was drawing near,
When the nights are dark and long,
This mother's own three sons came home,
Walking by the light of the moon.

And as soon as they reached to their own mother's gate,
So loud at the bell they ring,
There's none so ready as their own mother dear
To loose these children in.

The cloth was spread, the meat put on;
"No meat, Lord, can we take;
It's been so long and so many a day
Since you our dinner did make."

The bed was made, the sheets put on;
"No rest, Lord, can we take;
It's been so long and so many a day
Since you our bed did make."

Then Christ did call for the roasted cock,
Feathered with His holy hands,
He crowed three times all in the dish,
In the place where he did stand.

He crowed three times all in the dish,
Set at the table head,
"And isn't it a pity," they all did say,
"The quick should part from the dead.

"So farewell stick, farewell stone,
Farewell to the maidens all,
Farewell to the nurse that gave us suck,"
And down the tears did fall.

Side 1, Band 4

Tom of Bedlam

More properly titled "Mad Maudlin's Search for Her Tom of Bedlam," this fantasy quest of a woman gone mad from the loss of her lover, also mad, does not seem to have had much currency in the tradition. It has been "dug up" from print and popularized in the last few years, particularly by Tom Gilfellon of the High Level Ranters. Bedlamite songs were extremely popular in the 16th and 17th centuries, and this text, with a different tune, was published by Thomas D'Urfey in his *Pills to Purge Melancholy* in 1720. Related songs are to be found in Jack Lindsay's *Loving Mad Tom* (1927).

Bedlam was the popular name for the Hospital of St. Mary of Bethlehem, in London, for male mental patients, at a time when going out to watch the antics of these unfortunate souls was a popular diversion. The corresponding institution for women was named after Mary Magdalene, hence "Maudlin," as the corresponding vernacular.

To find my Tom of Bedlam ten thousand
years I'll travel,
Mad Maudlin goes on dirty toes
to save her shoes from gravel.

Still I sing: Bonny boys, bonny mad
boys,
Bedlam boys are bonny,
For they all go bare and they live by
the air,
And they want no drink nor money.

I now repent that ever
poor Tom was so disdainèd,
My wits are lost since him I crossed,
which makes me thus go chainèd.

I went to Pluto's kitchen
to beg some food one morning,
And there I got souls piping hot,
all on the spit a-turning.

There I took up a cauldron,
where boiled ten thousand harlots,
Though full of flame I drank the same,
to the health of all such varlets.

My staff has murdered giants,
my bag a long knife carries,
For to cut mince pies from children's
thighs, with which to feed the fairies.

A spirit hot as lightning
did on that journey guide me,
The sun did shake and the pale moon
quake, as soon as e'er they spied me.

No gypsy, slut, or doxy
shall win my Mad Tom from me,
I'll weep all night, with stars I'll
fight, the fray shall well become me.

So drink to Tom of Bedlam,
go fill the seas in barrels,
I'll drink it all, well brewed with gall,
and Maudlin drunk I'll quarrel.

Side 1, Band 5

The Dreadful Ghost

In a number of songs, a ship refuses to sail because of the presence of a Jonah, an evil-doer who must be sacrificed before the vessel can proceed. He often begs protection of the captain (or the captain, himself, pleads for the bosun's support), but this serves only to identify him when the troubles arise. In some instances he is picked out by the more chancy procedure of drawing lots. The motif was a popular one for broadside writers, and even spawned a theatrical production: Peacock reports the 1805 publication of *The Sailor and the Ghost*, "as sung by a trio of stage personalities." The appearance of a threatening ghost was generally a good guarantee that all things were not well.

Our version is Canadian, collected by Helen Creighton in the Maritimes, collated with Peacock's Newfoundland texts. Jean Ritchie, on hearing it sung, remarked that it must have been written by a woman.

It's of a sailor of whom I write,
Unto the seas he took great delight,
Two maidens fair he did beguile,
And those two maidens he had with child.

Oh, one of them, for public shame,
Unto some handsome grove she came,
And there, at length, for to end all
strife,
She cut it there, the thread of life.

She hung herself down from a tree,
Where two men a-hunting did her see,
They got a knife and cut her down,
And on her bosom a note was found.

And this was writ in letters large:
"Don't bury me, I do you charge,
But on the ground there let me lie,
That maids may see me as they pass by.

"Let them take warning by my fate,
And quit this folly before it's too late."
And while on land she plagued him so,
To the seas at length he was forced
to go.

One morning on the topmast high,
A little boat he chanced to spy,
A little boat with a large crew of men,
And a female ghost who stood up then.

Down decks, down decks this young man goes,
To greet the captain in his morning clothes,
He says, "Captain, captain, stand my defence,
For I see a spirit a-coming hence."

So up on deck this captain goes,
And there he spies this dreadful ghost,
She says, "Captain, Captain, come tell me true,
Does such a man sail among your crew?"

"It was in St. Taliens this young man died,
And in St. Taliens his body lies."
She says, "Captain, Captain, don't tell me so,
For he's sailing down in your ship below.

"And if you don't bring him up to me,
A mighty storm you soon shall see,
Which will cause both you and your gallant men to weep,
And leave you slumbering in the deep."

Down decks, down decks this captain goes,
And brings this young man up to his foes,
And when she fixed her grim eyes on him,
It made him tremble in every limb.

"Oh, don't you remember when I was a maid,
You caused my poor trembling heart to bleed;
Now I'm a spirit come for thou,
You baulked me once but I've got you now."

Down in her boat she forced him,
Down in her boat he was forced for to go,
And as he did, we all did admire,
For the boat went down in a flame of fire.

And as she sank, she rose again,
And aye she sang this mournful strain:
"You sailors all who are left behind,
Never prove false to young womankind."

Side 1, Band 6

The Foggy Dew

Though hardly supernatural, this ballad does have its elements of mystery, particularly in the meaning of the phrase "foggy dew." James Reeves sees it as symbolizing virginity, as "coarse dank grass." A. L. Lloyd looks to other variants, common in the Americas, where the "foggy dew" is replaced by the "bugaboo." Here is our ghost, and one in all probability contrived by the artful lover; but we still don't know where the foggy dew comes from.

Whatever its origin, the story is somewhat clearer here than in the setting popularized by Carl Sandburg and Burl Ives. It comes from the vast repertoire of the late Harry Cox of Catfield, Norfolk, though it has been changed a little passing from singer to singer around the folk clubs of England.

When I was a bachelor I lived all alone,
and I followed the roving trade,
And the only thing that I ever did wrong,
I courted a fair young maid.
I courted her for a summer season,
and part of the winter too,
And many's the times she rolled in my arms all over the foggy dew.

One night as I lay on my bed,
as I lay fast asleep,
Oh, then she came to my bedside,
and bitterly she did weep,
She wept, she moaned, she tore her hair,
and she cried, "What shall I do?
For tonight I'm resolved to sleep with you, for fear of the foggy dew."

All through the first part of that night,
how we did sport and play,
And through the second part of that night she in my arms did lay,
And when the daylight did appear she cried, "I am undone!"
"Oh, hold your tongue, you silly young thing, for the foggy dew is gone.

"Well, supposing you should have one child, 'twould make you laugh and smile,
And supposing you should have another, 'twould make you think awhile,
And supposing you should have another, and another one or two,
That'd make you leave off them foolish young tricks that you played in the foggy dew."

I loved that girl with all my heart,
I loved her as my life,
But in the second part of that year she became some other man's wife,
But I never told him of her faults,
and I never intend to do,
Nor of the times she rolled in my arms, all over the foggy dew.

Side 2, Band 1

The Derby Ram

Found in *Mother Goose*, widely known in England, America, and Australia, and even, as "Didn't He Ramble?" a New Orleans jazz classic, "The Derby Ram" has become one of the most popular songs in the English language. A. L. Lloyd describes it as a "randy animal-guiser song," which in these latter days survives more as a "bawdy anthem for beery students or soldiers coming home on leave." He identifies our monstrous beast as the Devil, the "genial horned deity" still half-worshipped in pagan ritual by the medieval peasant, oppressed by church and state alike.

We learned our version of the song from singers of the Nottingham Traditional Music Club.

As I went out to Derby,
upon a market day,
I spied the biggest ram, sir,
that ever was fed on hay.

Hey ringle dangle,
hey ringle day,
It was the biggest ram, sir,
that ever was fed on hay.

The horns upon this ram, sir,
they reached up to the moon,
A lad went up in April
and didn't get down till June.

The fleece upon this ram, sir,
it reached up to the sky,
The eagles made their nests there,
you could hear the young 'uns cry.

And all the boys of Derby
came begging for his eyes,
To kick around the streets, sir,
'cause they was football size.

And all the women of Derby
come begging for his ears,
To make 'em leather aprons
to last 'em forty years.

And all the men of Derby
come begging for his tail,
To ring St. George's passing bell
from top of Derby jail.

It took all the boys of Derby
to carry away his bones,
Took all the maids of Derby
to roll away his stones.

Now, the butcher that killed this ram,
sir, was up to his thighs in blood,
The boy that held the basin
was washed away in the flood.

And now my song is over,
I've got no more to say,
Just give us eggs and brandy,
and we'll be on our way.

Side 2, Band 2

The Maid on the Shore *(Child 43?)*

A jolly little tale, this, and one much better preserved in the northeast of America than in Britain (I know of no British variant). Our version comes from Etson Van Wagner of Roscoe, N. Y., via Norman Cazden's *Abelard Song Book*. The maid on the shore, either a siren or an unbelievably monotonous entertainer, turns out to be a redoubtable opponent, more than a match for the crew of rampant, horny sailors.

Bronson includes the song as a marine variant of "The Broomfield Hill," though there is little redundancy in the details of the plot.

There once was a fair maid I dearly
adored,
Her beauty, it did shine clear, O,
And all she could find for to ease her
sad mind
Was to wander alone on the shore,
O shore,
Was to wander alone on the shore.

And there was a sea-captain who ploughed
the salt seas,
He had sailed the salt seas all around, O,
This beautiful maiden he chanced for
to spy,
"Don't I wish that I had her on board."

The steward, he ran and he lowered
the boat,
And quickly he rowed it to shore, O,
And these were the very first words
he did say:
"Fair maid, won't you venture on board?"

By coaxing, persuading, she entered
the boat,
And quickly he rowed her on board, O,
Our captain, he smiled and spat out
his chew,
Saying, "Fare you well, sorrow and care."

The captain, he poured out the richeri wine
That sparkles so bright and so clear, O,
Saying, "First you will lie in my arms all this night,
And then I'll hand you to my crew."

"Oh, thank you, oh, thank you," this maiden replied,
"That's just what I've been waiting for, O,
For I've grown so weary of my maidenhead
As I wander alone on the shore."

She sat herself down in the stern of the ship,
Her voice was so fair and so clear, O,
She sang them so sweet, so neat and complete,
She sang captain and sailors to sleep.

She robbed them of silver, she robbed them of gold,
She robbed them of costly a-ware, O,
Our captain's bright sword she used for an oar,
To row herself back to the shore.

"Oh, were my men crazy, or were they all drunk,
Or were they sunk deep in despair, O?
To see her get away with her beauty so gay,
Don't I wish that I had her once more."

And yonder she stands, all alone on the strand,
A-waving her handkerchief fair, O,
Saying, "You are the captain that sails the salt seas,
And I'm still a maid on the shore,
O shore,
And I am the maid on the shore.

Side 2, Band 3.

Reynardine

Our setting of this song, perhaps best known to the dramatic mixolydian tune collected in Suffolk by A. L. Lloyd and popularized by him, is to the melody given by Stephen Sedley in *The Seeds of Love*, which Tony heard in a London folk club.

Irish in sentiment and almost certainly so in origin, the song conjures visions of the folk tale's Mr. Fox, dismembering the young girls he has seduced away to his forest mansion, a sylvan Bluebeard whose bestial cruelty is matched only by his cunning charm.

One evening as I rambled,
two miles below Fermoy,
I met a pretty fair maiden
all on the mountains high,
I said, "My pretty fair maiden,
your beauty shines most clear,
And on this lonesome mountain
I'm glad to meet you here."

She said, "Young man, be civil,
my company forsake,
For to my good opinion
I fear you are a rake,
And if my parents came to know,
my life they would destroy,
For keeping of you company
all on the mountains high."

"Oh, no, my dear, I am no rake
brought up in Venus' train,
But I'm searching for concealment
all from the judge's men;
Your beauty has ensnared me,
I cannot pass you by,
And with my gun I'll guard you
all on the mountains high."

Her cherry cheeks and ruby lips,
they lost their former dye,
And she fell into his arms there,
all on the mountains high;
He had not kissed her once or twice
when she came to again,
And modestly she asked him,
"Oh, sir, what is your name?"

"Well, if by chance you look for me,
by chance you'll not me find,
'Tis writ in ancient history,
my name is Reynardine."
Sun and dark she followed him,
his teeth so bright did shine,
And he led her over the mountains,
that sly bold Reynardine.

So come all you pretty fair maidens,
this warning take by me:
Never go a-roving and shun bad company,
For if you do you'll surely rue,
until the day you die,
And beware of meeting Reynardine
all on the mountains high.

Side 2, Band 4

The False Lady *(Child 68)*

In common with other American examples, this New England version of "Young Hunting" has lost the ending of Child's primary Scottish texts, in which the heroine is burned at the stake for her transgressions. Jealousy is often a good enough motive for murder, but death is still a rather high price to pay for a little white lie. The episode featuring the talking parrot is often lost in American variants; for example, Frank Proffitt's North Carolina version replaces the bird with a servant man. Wimberly feels that the bird may embody the soul of the dead lover. This might explain why it remains unconvinced by the sweet talk, though, in ballads as in life, conversational birds are seldom ingenuous.

"Abide, abide, true love," she said,
"Beg and stay all night,
You shall have pleasure in my room
With a coal and a candle light, light,
With a coal and a candle light."

"I won't abide, you false lady,
And beg and stay all night,
For I have a far better love to enjoy,
When I go home, than you."

As he stooped over saddle bow
To kiss her lips so sweet,
And with a penknife in her hand,
She wounded him full deep.

"Why woundest me, you false lady,
Why woundest me so sore?
There's not a doctor in all Scotland
Can heal my mortal wound."

She awoke her maids in the morning,
Just at the break of day,
Saying, "There's a dead man in my
bed-chamber,
I wish he was away."

Some took him by the lily-white hands,
And others by the feet,
They threw him into a very deep well,
Full fifty fathoms deep.

"Lie there, lie there, you false young
man,
Lie there, lie there alone,
And let the one that you love best
Think you long a-coming home."

Oh, then up spoke a pretty little bird,
Sitting in a tree:
"An ill death may you die, lady,
For he had no love but thee."

"Come down, come down, my pretty little
bird,
Sit upon my knee,
For I have a golden cage at home
That I will give to thee."

"I won't come down, you false lady,
And sit upon your knee,
For you have slain your own true love,
And I'm sure you would slay me."

"I wish I had my bow to bend,
My arrow and my string,
I'd shoot you through the very heart,
Among the leaves so green."

"Well, if you had your bow to bend,
Your arrow and your string,
I'd take my wings and away I'd fly,
You'd never see me again."

Side 2, Band 5

Polly Vaughn

Child apparently did not think enough of this ballad to canonize it; it does not seem possible that he would not have known it. The Scot Robert Jamieson, who published his collection of ballads in 1806, characterized it as "one of the very lowest descriptions of vulgar modern English ballads." Yet the ballad has remained popular in the tradition, and the plot shows every indication of considerable antiquity. Lloyd points out that the girl, using her apron as protection from the rain, has been identified as a modern relative of a swan maiden or an enchanted doe. Maiden by day, swan by night, hated and envied, killed with a magic gun, reappearing as a spirit to clear her lover -- this is the stuff of epic fairy tales.

Our tune comes from Maine, from the book of songs, learned from her parents, authored by Carrie Grover of Bethel; our text comes from Harry Cox and A. L. Lloyd.

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

As Polly went walking, a rainstorm come on,
She hid under the bushes, the shower for to shun.
With her apron wrapped over her, he took her for a swan,
And his gun didn't miss, and it was Polly his own.

Then home rushed young Jimmy, with his dog and his gun,
Crying, "Uncle, dear Uncle, have you heard what I've done?
Oh, cursed be that gunsmith that made my old gun,
For I've shot my own true love, in the room of a swan."

Then out rushed bold uncle, with his locks hanging grey,
Crying, "Jimmy, dear Jimmy, don't you run away.
Don't you leave your own country till your trial come on,
For they never will hang you for the shooting of a swan."

Well, the funeral of Polly, it was a brave sight,
With four and twenty young men, and all dressed in white,
They took her to the graveyard and they laid her in the clay,
And they bid adieu to Polly, and all went away.

Now, the girls of this country, they're all glad, we know,
To see Polly Vaughn a-lying so low.
You could gather them into a mountain, you could plant them in a row,
And her beauty would shine amongst them like a fountain of snow.

Well, the trial wore on, and young Polly did appear,
Crying, "Uncle, dear Uncle, let Jimmy go clear,
For my apron was bound round me, and he took me for a swan,
And my poor heart lay a-bleeding all on the green ground."

Side 2, Band 6

The Two Magicians *(Child 44)*

The idea of changing shape to avoid capture and outwit or kill a pursuer is common in European folk tale. One example, "Farmer Weatherbeard," as translated from the Norse, was included in *The Red Fairy Book* by Andrew Lang. T. H. White borrowed the motif for his battle of the wizards in *The Once and Future King*, where Merlin, living his life from future to past, finally wins by turning into a virus for which the remedy was not yet discovered, and leaping down his opponent's throat.

In Britain, the tales spawned the ballad of "The Two Magicians," as well as the lyric song "Hares on the Mountain" ("If all the young women were hares on the mountain, then I'd take a gun and I'd go out a-hunting"). A. L. Lloyd writes (*Sing Out*, Vol. 18, # 1): "Eventually, the ballad dwindled away, but it seemed too good a song to remain unused, so I brushed it up and fitted a tune, and now it appears to have started a new life."

The lady sits at her own front door
As straight as the willow wand,
And by there come a lusty smith
With his hammer in his hand (crying):

Bide, lady, bide,
For there's nowhere you can hide,
For the lusty smith will be your love,
And he will lay your pride.

"Why may you sit there, lady fair,
All in your robes of red?
Why, come tomorrow at this same time,
I'll have you in my bed" (crying):

"Away, away, you coal-black smith,
Would you do me this wrong,
For to think to have my maidenhead
That I have kept so long?
I'd rather I was dead and cold,
And my body laid in the grave,
Than a husky, dusky, coal-black smith
My maidenhead should have" (crying):

So the lady she curled up her hand,
And she swore upon the mould
That he'd not have her maidenhead
For all of a pot of gold.
But the blacksmith he curled up his hand,
And he swore upon the mass
That he would have her maidenhead
For the half of that or less (crying):

So the lady, she turned into a dove
And flew up into the air,
Ah, but he became an old cock-pigeon,
And they flew pair and pair (cooing):

(The Two Magicians, *cont.*)

So the lady, she turned into a mare
As dark as the night was black,
Ah, but he became a golden saddle,
And he clung upon to her back (itching):

So the lady, she turned into a hare,
And ran all over the plain,
Ah, but he became a greyhound dog,
And he ran her down again (barking):

So the lady, she turned into a fly
And fluttered up into the air,
Ah, but he became a big hairy spider
And dragged her into his lair (spinning):

So the lady, she turned into a sheep
A-grazing on yon common,
Ah, but he became a big horny ram,
And soon he was upon her (bleating):

So she turned into a full-dressed ship,
And she sailed all over the sea,
Ah, but he became a bold captain
And aboard of her went he (ordering):

So the lady, she turned into a cloud
A-floating away in the air,
Ah, but he became a lightning flash
And he zipped right into her (shocking):

So she turned into a mulberry tree,
A mulberry tree in the wood,
Ah, but he came forth as the morning dew
And he sprinkled her where she stood
(dripping):

So the lady, she ran into the bedroom,
And she changed into a bed,
Ah, but he became a green coverlet
And he gained her maidenhead:

And once she woke, he took her so,
And still he bade her bide,
And the lusty smith became her love,
For all of her mighty pride.

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Booklet design by Lani Herrmann

DISCOGRAPHY

John Roberts and Tony Barrand have made four recordings for other companies. We list them here because we are sure that you will want to obtain copies of all of them.

Spencer the Rover is alive and well and living in Ithaca (ST 1) and *Across the Western Ocean* (ST 4) are available from:

SWALLOWTAIL RECORDS
c/o Phil Shapiro
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Ithaca, New York 14850

Mellow with Ale from the Horn (FHR-04) and *Nowell Sing We Clear* - A Pageant of Mid-Winter Carols (FHR-013) are available from:

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R.D. 1 - Wormer Road
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Folk-Legacy Records, Inc., was founded in 1961 by Lee B. Haggerty, Mary W. Haggerty, and Sandy Paton. Our primary purpose has been to preserve the rich heritage of our traditional music and lore while encouraging the best of what has been termed the "emerging tradition" — that is, the performance of authentic folk material by dedicated interpreters (those not born to the tradition but whose repertoires are derived from it), as well as the creation of new songs and ballads by contemporary songmakers whose original material has been influenced by their respect for our folk legacy.

Our first recording (FSA-1 - Frank Proffitt, of Reese, North Carolina) is an example of the former; this album, together with, say, our several recordings of Gordon Bok, represents the latter. We feel that the two aspects of our endeavor are of equal importance and urge our listeners to investigate them both. To listen only to the interpretive artists is to overlook the sources of their inspiration; to listen only to the traditional performers is to ignore a new, non-commercial music that offers much of value to contemporary society.

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S.P.