

VOLUME THREE

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FA 2322

American Favorite Ballads

Tunes and Songs

John Brown's Body
The Girl I Left Behind
Oh, Mary Don't You Weep
St. Louis Blues

Swanee River
Camp Town Races
Swing Low Sweet Chariot
Good Night Irene

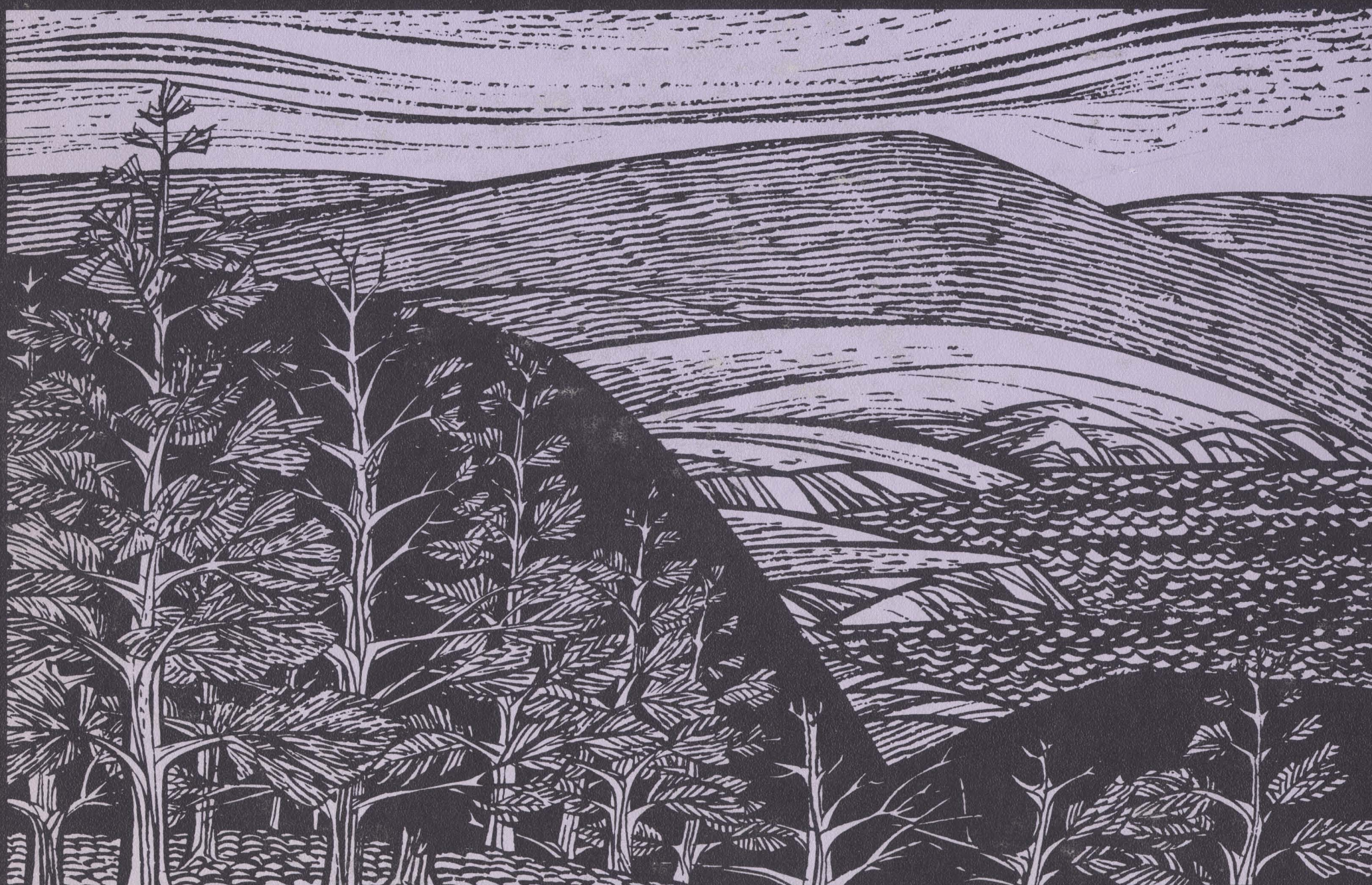
My Good Man
Clementine
Dink's Song
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Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child
Wimoweh
The Farmer's Cursst Wife
When I First Came To This Land

Sung by Pete Seeger

With 5 String Banjo and 12 String Guitar

Cover design by Ronald Clyne



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43 W. 61st ST., N.Y.C., U.S.A. 10023

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Library of Congress Card Catalogue # R 57-840 rev 3

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SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

American Favorite Ballads

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Sung by Pete Seeger With 5-string banjo, guitar and 12-string guitar

PETE SEEGER . . . HIS SONGS AND HIS WORK

The songs Pete Seeger sings are a true cross-section of American life. They come from many parts of the country. Some are old, some recent, and they tell of real people and events . . . of strife and trouble, of wars and pestilence, of love and tenderness and beauty. They are mostly handed down orally from generation to generation. Some are collected by scholars and labelled as "folk songs" and published in books. Others are modernized and altered to fit whatever the popular music standard of the moment might be and become popular favorites.

Although in subject matter they might range from building railroads or coal mining to courting songs and lullabies, they all have a quality about them which makes them of a family. Each one gives a true and razor-sharp portrait of the person or community which birthed and nurtured it. Each has in it the look and texture and feeling of the people from whom it came.

Sometimes Pete sings the songs as closely in text and style as he can to the original spirit of the song. At other times he might change the song to suit more modern feelings and times. "Goodnight Irene" was sung pretty much as the famous Negro folk-singer Huddie Ledbetter (Leadbelly) taught it to Pete. On the other hand, "Kisses Sweeter Than Wine" is an example of a modernized song. Originally it was an ancient Irish ditty about a deceased cow. But through the handiwork first of Leadbelly who added the chorus line, and then of Pete who added the present verses, it has evolved into the song which has twice in the past decade been a sweeping national hit.

Pete's repertoire knows few boundaries, musically or internationally. The songs come from many parts of the world and are sung in many languages. Most unique, however, is Pete's unique ability to transcend the normal gulf which separates the performer from the audience and actually share the music experience of the song directly with his audience. Through his song leading he establishes a rapport with his audience unmatched in the folk performance field. In a matter of minutes Pete will have an entirely strange group tapping their feet and lustily singing songs from Africa, Asia, and Europe, as well as favorite American songs.

PHOTO BY DAVID GAHR



His material comes from diversified sources. Much of it comes directly from the people who keep alive the old traditions or who are creating new traditions of their own. Some comes from song books, old and new, and phonograph records. Collections such as the Anthology of folk music in the Library of Congress and the Folkways Ethnic Library are examples of source materials. Pete keeps the songs in their authentic setting whenever possible through the type of accompaniment he gives them and by imparting the same kind of emotional feeling into the song that the original singer might have put in.

Much of Pete's time and energies are directed towards bringing folk songs directly to audiences throughout the United States and Canada. Between tours Pete spends his time actively in collecting and writing on folk songs, recording them on longplaying records for Folkways Records, and keeping in motion a voluminous amount of correspondence with interested people all over the world. In addition he and his wife Toshi are pioneering a new field of folklore collecting . . . utilizing a 16mm sound movie camera. With this they are producing educational films documenting actual folk styles of playing various instruments and related material.

"Anyone who has tried to learn a folk instrument by simply listening to a recording knows the problem. You have to **see** it," he says. Finished already are studies of the American five-string banjo, the Trinidad steel drum, and American fiddling techniques, and in a related vein films on children's finger games and on decorating Christmas wrapping paper with fingerpaints. Soon to be released are studies of country fiddling techniques, blues guitar, gospel tambourine playing and others.

"If we truly love folk music, we will want to learn the very best of the old traditions, in order to pass them on to those who will put together the folk-music of future generations."
—Ed Badeaux

THE FARMER'S CURST WIFE



PETE SEEGER AND FAMILY

Photo by David Gahr

SWING LOW, SWEET CHARIOT

Swing low, sweet chariot, coming for to carry me
home,
Swing low, sweet chariot, coming for to carry me
home.

I looked over Jordan, and what did I see.
A band of angels, coming after me.

If you get there, before I do,
Tell all my friends, I'm coming too.

GOODNIGHT, IRENE

Irene, goodnight, Irene goodnight.
Goodnight Irene, Goodnight Irene, I'll see you in
my dreams.

Sometimes I live in the country, sometimes I live in
town,
Sometimes I take a great notion, to jump into the
river and drown.

I asked your mother for you, she told me you was
too young,
I wished to God I'd never seen your face, I'm sorry
you ever was born.

You caused me to weep, you caused me to mourn,
you caused me to live my home.
But the very last words I heard her say, was please
sing me one more song.

SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE A MOTHERLESS CHILD

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child,
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child,
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child,
A long ways from home, a long way from home.

Sometimes I feel like I'm almost gone.

Sometimes I feel like a feather in the air.

Sometimes I feel like I'm almost gone.

There was an old man, lived over the hill,
If he ain't moved away, he's a living there still,
Sing fah-de-ing-ing, dah-de-ing, ding, diddi-um-da-de-
ing-ding,
Diddi-um-da-de-ing-ding, diddie-um day.
Well, the devil came up to him one day,
Said one of your family I'm gonna take away.
Oh please don't take my eldest son,
There's work on the farm that's gotta be done.
It's all I want, that wife of yours,
Well you can take her with all of my heart.
Well, he picks the wife up upon his back,
And off to hell he goes clickitty-clack.
He carries her on about a mile down the road,
He said old woman you're a devil of a load.
He carries her down to the gates of hell,
He says poke up the fire we'll scorch her well.
There were two little devils with ball and with chain,
She ups with her foot and she kicks out their brains.
And nine little devils went climbing up the wall,
Saying take her back daddy, she'll murder us all.
Well, I got up next morning, I spied through a crack,
I seen the old devil come a dragging her back.
He said here is your wife, both sound and well,
If I'd a kept her any longer she'd a torn up hell.
He said I've been a devil most all of my life,
But I'd never been in hell till I met with your wife.
Now, this only goes to show, what a woman can do,
She can whip out the devil and her husband too.
This shows that the women are better than men,
They can go down to hell and come back again.

WHEN I FIRST CAME TO THIS LAND

When I first came to this land, I was not a wealthy
man,
So I got myself a shack, and I did what I could.

And I called my shack, break my back,
But the land was sweet and good, and I did what I
could.

2nd verse cow. Called my cow, no milk now.

3rd verse duck. Called my duck, out of luck.

4th verse wife. Called my wife, run for your life.

5th verse son. Called my son, my work's done.

CREDITS

St. Louis Blues - Words and music by W. C. Handy

Four Nights Drunk - Extra verse by the Weavers

Dink's Song - Collected and Arranged by the Lomax
family

Swanee River - Words and music by Stephen Foster

Camptown Races - Words & music by Stephen
Foster

Goodnight, Irene - by Huddie Ledbetter

Wimoweh - by Solomon Linda (South Africa)

When I first Came To This Land - English words
by Oscar Brand

The Farmer's Curst Wife - As learned from
Lee Hays

JOHN BROWN'S BODY

John Brown's body lies a moulderin' in the grave,
John Brown's body lies a moulderin' in the grave,
John Brown's body lies a moulderin' in the grave,
But his soul goes marching on.

Glory, glory, hallelujah (3)
But his soul goes marching on.

The stars above in heaven are a'lookin'
kindly down, (3)
On the grave of old John Brown.

(CHORUS)

He captured Harper's Ferry with his nineteen
men so true,
He frightened Old Virginia till she trembled
through and through,
They hanged him for a traitor, themselves the
traitor's crew,

(CHORUS)

Well, he's gone to be a soldier in the army of
the Lord, (3)
But his soul goes marching on.

(CHORUS)

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the
Lord,
He's trampling out the vintage where the grapes of
wrath are stored,
He's loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible,
swift sword,
His truth is marching on.

(CHORUS)

THE GAL I LEFT BEHIND ME (Instrumental)

OH MARY, DON'T YOU WEEP

Oh, Mary, don't you weep, don't you moan,
Oh, Mary, don't you weep, don't you moan,
Pharoah's army got drowned,
Oh, Mary don't you weep.

Mary wore three links of chain,
Every link was Jesus name.

One of these nights about twelve o'clock,
This old world's gonna reel and rock.

If I could I surely would,
Stand on the rock where Moses stood.

God gave Noah the rainbow sign,
No more water but fire next time.

ST. LOUIS BLUES

I hate to see, that evening sun go down,
I hate to see, that evening sun go down,
Cause my baby, she done left this town.

Well, I'm feeling tomorrow, just like I feel
today, (2)
Gonna pack my troubles, and make my getaway.

St. Louis woman, with all her diamond rings,
Took that man around, by her apron strings,
Weren't for powder, and for store bought hair,
That gal of mine could not have gone nowhere.

Got the St. Louis blues, just as blue as I can be,
That gal got a heart, like a rock cast in the sea,
Else she wouldn't have gone so far from me.

Oh, Mississippi river, long, deep and wide,
I got to find my sweet gal on the other side.
Take me back to St. Louis, take me back to St. Louis,
Take me back to St. Louis, where I can lose those
St. Louis blues.

FOUR NIGHTS DRUNK (My Good Man)

Well, the other night when I got home, drunk as I
could be,
I spied a horse in the stable, where my horse ought
to be.
I says to my wife, my pretty little wife, explain
this thing to me,
What's this horse doing in the stable, where my
horse ought to be.

You blind fool, you drunken old fool, can't you
never see,
That's nothing but an old milk cow, my granny gave
to me.

I traveled this wide world over, ten thousand miles
or more,
And a saddle on a milk cow's back, I never did see
before.

The second night, I got home, drunk as I could be,
I spied a hat on the hatrack, where my hat ought to
be.
I says to my wife, my pretty little wife, explain
this thing to me,
What's this hat doing here on the hatrack, where my
hat ought to be.

You blind fool, you drunken old fool, can't you never
see,
That's nothing but an old chamber pot my granny gave
to me.

I traveled this wide world over, ten thousand miles
or more,
And a J.B. Stetson chamber pot, I never did see before.

I got home the third night, drunk as I could be,
I spied some pants upon the chair where my pants ought
to be.
I says to my wife, my pretty little wife, explain this
thing to me,
What's these pants doing here upon the chair, where
my pants ought to be.

You blind fool, you drunken old fool, can't you
never see,
That's nothing but an old dish rag, my granny gave to
me.

I've traveled this wide world over, ten thousand
miles or more,
And zippers on a dishrag I never did see before.*

I got home the fourth night, drunk as I could be,
I spied a head on the pillow, where my head ought to
be.

I says to my wife, my pretty little wife, explain
this thing to me,
What's this head doing here on the pillow, where my
head ought to be.

You blind fool, you drunken old fool, can't you
plainly see,
That's nothing but an old cabbage head, my granny
gave to me.

I've traveled this wide world over, ten thousand
miles or more,
And a mustache on a cabbage head I never did see
before.

Well, the fifth night, I got home, drunk as I
could

CLEMENTINE

In a cavern, in a canyon, excavating for a mine,
Lived a miner, forty-niner, and his daughter
Clementine.

Oh, my darlin', oh my darlin', oh my darlin'
Clementine,
You are lost and gone forever, dreadful sorry
Clementine.

Light she was and, like a fairy, and her shoes were
number nines,
Herring boxes, without topses, sandals were for
Clementine.

Drove she ducklings to the water, every morning
just at nine,
Stubbed her toe upon a splinter, fell into the
foaming brine.

Ruby lips above the water, blowing bubbles soft and
fine,
But alas I was no swimmer, so I lost my Clementine.

There's a churchyard, on the hillside, where the
flowers grow and twine,
There grow roses, 'mongst the posies, fertilized by
Clementine.

DINK'S SONG

If I had wings like Noah's dove, I'd fly up the river
to the one I love,
Fare thee well, oh honey, fare thee well.

That gal I love, she's long and tall.
She moves her body like a cannonball.

One of these days, and it won't be long,
You call my name, and I'll be gone.

One of these nights, was a drizzling rain,
All around my heart was an aching pain.

If I had wings, like Noah's dove,
I'd fly up the river, to the one I love.

NEW RIVER TRAIN

I'm riding on that new river train,
I'm riding on that new river train,
It's the same old train that brought me here,
It's soon gonna carry me again.

Oh, darling, you can't love but one, (2)
Oh, you can't love but one, and have any fun.

Darling, you can't love two (2)
You can't love two, and still to me be true.

Darling you can't love three (2)
You can't love three, and still be true to me.

Darling, you can't love four, (2)
You can't love four, and love me any more.

Darling, you can't love five (2)
You can't love five, get your honey from my bee
hive.

Darling you can't love six (2)
You can't love six, and do any tricks.

Oh, darling you can't love seven (2)
You can't love seven and expect to get to heaven.

Darling, you can't love eight (2)
You can't love eight, and get through the Pearly
Gates.

Oh, darling you can't love nine, (2)
You can't love nine, and still be mine.

Oh, riding on that New River Train (2)
The same old train that brought me here, soon gonna
carry me again.

SWANEE RIVER

Way down upon the Swanee River, far, far away,
There's where my heart is turning ever,
That's where the old folks stay.

All the world is sad and dreary,
Everywhere I roam.

Old brother, how my heart grows weary,
Far from the old folks at home.

All up and down the whole creation,
Sadly I roam,
Still longing for the old plantation,
And for the old folks at home.

When will I see the bees a'humming,
All round the comb,
When will I hear the banjos strumming
Down in my good old home.

CAMPTOWN RACES

Gwine to run all night, gwine to run all day,
I bet my money on a bob-tailed nag, somebody bet
on the bay.

Oh, the Camptown lady sing this song, doo da, doo da,
Camptown race track's eight miles long, Oh, dee doo
da day.

Oh, the long tailed Lilly and the big black horse,
Come to a mud hole and they all cut across.

I went down South with my hat caved in,
I come back North with a pocket full of tin.