

The Day The Freeway Froze
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Money Blues
The Miracle

ANOTHER COUNTY HEARD FROM

Songs composed and sung by Malvina Reynolds

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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FOLKWAYS RECORDS FN2524
Songs composed and sung by Malvina Reynolds
Accompanied by Erik Darling



FOLKWAYS RECORDS Album No. FN 2524

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ANOTHER COUNTY HEARD FROM



MALVINA REYNOLDS

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How come San Francisco sings about Los Angeles, New York and Hamelin? As the editors of The Nation said in that magazine's exposure-in-depth of the shame of the biggest city (11/31/59), New York is "still just another big city...Basically there is nothing unique about its problems; to some degree, its shame is the shame of every big city." So, just as when you sing of one pair of lovers, if you sing truthfully you sing for them all, so if you sing of one city, one little girl, one draftee, you sing for them all.

Story telling and making rhymes have always been the thing with me. When I was a kid on Buchanan Street in San Francisco, on a pleasant evening I would sit on a step on the steep flight outside our second story flat and tell the other kids long stories about I don't know what. I loved those quiet listening faces in the half-light of the street lamp, and the sound of my own voice, and the fancies that spun themselves out of my head. Then later it was rhymes and jingles, and epics, heroic plays in iambic pentameter, and newspaper articles.

Some years ago I got a guitar and was up to my neck in the folk songs, rediscovered by the great collectors of that time. Pretty soon my verses were emerging with tunes attached. I have a theory that the divorce of verse and song is an unnatural one, and that speech itself is a rudimentary kind of song, but I'll talk about that some other time.

Under modern methods of division of labor, the song writer writes and the singer sings, and never the twain shall meet, not even in the publisher's office. I like to sing my own sometimes, and this is in an old and honorable tradition. I can thank Folkways Records for the opportunity to reach a wider audience than met with me evenings on the steps on Buchanan street.

The songs in this album are about a lot of different things and in many different moods..the principal unifying factor is the fact that I wrote them all. A couple of them should have a footnote or two. "Oh Doctor!", for instance, was first sung by Bud and Travis at San Francisco's basement night club, the Purple Onion, during the A.M.A. convention in that city. They tell me it was well received. I wish I had been there to hear it, but I can't afford night clubs and I don't drink. Anyway, the introductory part makes the song suitable for men singers, and I like the introduction, so that's the way I sing it.

And this is to acknowledge the bathroom faucet in Eric and Joan Darling's charming apartment on West End Avenue in New York as the final inspiration for one of these songs. Eric's guitar and banjo enriched the background of many of the songs in this album, and his expert musicianship and his encouragement of me helped me through my first recording.

- Malvina Reynolds

Biographical material--Malvina Reynolds

I was born in San Francisco in 1900 of immigrant parents, my father from Hungary, my mother from Russia. My father used to tell of coming to relatives in New York from Buda Pesth, where he had been a tailor's apprentice, underfed and overworked. Life in New York was not much easier. On his day off, he would hang around the docks and watch the ships go out. A man who spoke his

language asked him what he was doing, and he said he wished he was on one of those ships going home. "I can fix you up with a ship," the man said, and he took Pa to an office where he said yes and no and signed his name, and he was in the U.S. Navy for four years. He shipped over a couple of times and was a sailor when I was born, but left the Navy when I was two and set up the first naval tailoring shop on the West Coast, in Vallejo. He got a quick introduction to American life and ways aboard the old Pensacola and the Bennington, and since the crews were mostly New York Irish, he spoke his excellent U.S. English with a touch of the brogue till the day he died. Gentle and principled people, my parents, they never made much money, and scrimped and saved, as so many immigrants did for their children, to send us to college and give us some musical education.

I graduated with honors and a Ph.D. into the depression, and never did get a teaching job. We were a Socialist family, and the silent blacklist may have accounted for that--though I was always a better scholar than job hunter.

In the 30's I married a carpenter-labor organizer. We raised a daughter, and I've worked on and off at many kinds of jobs--as musician, steel worker, tailor, social worker, newspaper editor. I'm a good cook, love to serve dinner to a housefull of people, but please don't all come at once. I like to scrub floors, but can never get my desk straightened out-- I can't afford the donations and hate to say no.

I've lived in and around San Francisco most of my life. I find travel stimulating and enlightening, but I can't wait to get home. The beautiful city is getting crowded, smoggy and noisy, and we dream of a place about seventy miles out where Bud can go back to some of his country ways, raising a garden and cutting wood for the stove, and I can have a study that looks out on a garden over a desk cluttered with unfinished lyrics and unanswered mail.

M.R.

THE PIED PIPER

Rats, rats, everywhere,
In the kitchen and down the stair,
Rocking babies in their cradles,
Tasting soup in the cooks' soup ladles,
Eating flour from every bin,
And raising the devil in Hamelin,
Hamelin, Germany, long time ago.

Rats, rats, everywhere,
Wherever you looked, the rats were there,
Took a nap in Papa's shoes,
Sat in the living room and read the news,
What a condition that town was in,
Little old town of Hamelin...

Mayor and Council scratched their heads,
Tossed and turned in their ratty beds,
Passed a big appropriation
To count the rats in the population,
Solemnly resolved that it was a sin
For rats to live in Hamelin...

Little man knocked at the Mayor's door,
No one had ever seen him before,
Dressed in clothes of a gayer mood
Than ever are seen in Hollywood:
"If the Mayor will let me in
I'll drive the rats from Hamelin...

They hugged him, kissed him, patted his head.
"What is your name?" the Mayor said.
"I'm the Pied Piper, I blow this horn
And there never was a rat that ever was born
Could resist my merry din,
Not even the rats of Hamelin...

"Oh blow your horn both far and wide
And save our city!" the Mayor cried.
"Whatever you ask we will gladly pay,
If you'll only drive these rats away.
A couple of grand you will surely win
If you get the rats out of Hamelin...

A tweedley-dee and a foodley-doh,
A little tune he started to blow.
It sounded like bacon, it sounded like cheese,
It sounded like kitcheny melodies.
The rats came out with a snicker and a grin
From all the houses of Hamelin...

They followed the music bright and gay
Over the hills and far away.
The Hamelinians loudly cheered
As the rat procession disappeared,
And never a rat was seen again
In the little old town of Hamelin.

The Piper waited hat in hand
To collect his fee for a couple of grand.
Mayor and Council scratched their pates:
"This is way above union rates.
For a tune on the flute of the violin
We only pay scale in Hamelin...

Pied Piper said, "Okay!"
Put on his hat and turned away,
Started playing a couple of tunes
Sounded like candy and toy balloons,
Like merry-go-rounds in a jolly spin,
Calling the children of Hamelin...

The children came out into the street,
Followed the Piper with dancing feet,
Followed the music bright and gay
Over the hills and far away.
The town got quiet like it never had been
Since the beginning of Hamelin...

In some country far away,
A bunch of hip cats swing and sway,
And a gaudy Piper, old and gray,
Plays on his clarinet night and day,
While way back home their sorrowing kin
Mourn for the children of Hamelin,
Hamelin, Germany, my grandma told me so
A long, long time ago.

WE HATE TO SEE THEM GO

Last night, I had a lovely dream.
I saw a big parade, with ticker tape galore,
And men were marching there the like I'd never
seen before.

Oh, the bankers and the diplomats
Are going in the army.
Oh, happy day! I'd give my pay
To see them on parade,

Their paunches at attention
And their striped pants at ease,
They've gotten patriotic
And they're going overseas.
We'll have to do the best we can
And bravely carry on,
So we'll just keep the laddies here
To manage while they're gone.

Oh, oh,
We hate to see them go,
The gentlemen of distinction in the army.

Oh, the bankers and the diplomats
Are going in the army.
It seemed too bad to keep them
From the wars they love to plan.
We're all of us contented
That they'll fight a dandy war,
They don't need propaganda,
They know what they're fighting for.
They'll march away with dignity
And in the best of form,
And we'll just keep the laddies here
To keep the lassies warm.

Oh, oh,
We hate to see them go...

The bankers and the diplomats
Are going in the army.
We're going to make things easy
Cause it's all so new and strange.
We'll give them silver shovels
When they have to dig a hole,
And they can sing in harmony
When answering the roll.
They'll eat their old K-rations
From a hand-embroidered box,
And when they die, we'll bring them home
And bury them in Fort Knox.

Oh, oh,
We hate to see them go...

LET IT BE

When you walk in the forest, let it be.
There's a flower in the wood, let it be.
There's a flower in the wood,
And it's innocent and good,
By the stone where it stands, let it be.

Let it be, let it be.
It's so lovely where it is, let it be.
Though you want it for your own,
If you take it from its place,
It will not be what it was,
When you loved it where it stood
In the wood.

Let it be, let it be.
It's so lovely where it is, let it be.
It's a thoughtful child,
Innocent and wild,
In the wood by the stone let it be.

Let her be, let her be.
When you walk in the forest, let her be.
You think that you love her,
And you want to discover
How she's made, so you take her apart,
And break her heart.

THE FAUCETS ARE DRIPPING

The faucets are dripping in old New York City,
The faucets are dripping, and Oh, what a pity!
The reservoir's drying,
Because it's supplying
The faucets that drip in New York.

You can't ask the landlord to put in a washer,
He'd rather you'd move than to put in a washer,
The faucets are dripping, they sound in my ears,
The tap in the bathroom's been running for years.

The faucets are dripping...

There's a wild streak of green in the sink in the
kitchen,
It comes from the rill trickling out of the
plumbing,
The streams from the mountains, the pools from
the sea,
All run from my faucet and down to the sea.

The faucets are dripping...

You can't ask the landlord to put in a washer,
You can't ask the landlord to mend the old
stairs,
He takes in the rents, and he lives in Miami
Where faucets don't drip and there's sun
everywhere.

The faucets are dripping...

The faucets are dripping, the landlord's content.
With every new tenant he raises the rent.
The buildings can crumble, the tenants can cry,
There's a shortage of housing, you'll live there
or die.

The faucets are dripping...

They're building some buildings and new city
centers;
It's sure working hell with the low-income
renters,
They're jammed into rooms with the rat and the
fly,
Where the faucets all drip and the floor's
never dry.

The faucets are dripping in old New York City,
The faucets are dripping, and Oh, what a pity!
The reservoir's drying,
Because it's supplying
The faucets that drip in New York.

DONT TALK TO ME OF LOVE

Don't talk to me of love any more,
Don't talk to me of love,
Beau Brummel dandy,
Pink sugar candy,
Moonlight and fluff
And gossamer stuff.
Don't talk of heartache,
Make mine a beefsteak,
Don't talk to me of love.

Blow a bubble, fly a kite,
Dance a rhumba, see a fight,
I'm traveling light tonight, Babe,
Don't talk to me of love.

Don't talk to me of love any more,
Don't talk to me of love.
Beau Brummel dandy,
Pink sugar candy,
Cupids and lace
All over the place.
Why should my tears fall
For just one meat ball?
Don't talk to me of love.

Ah, love! It's so wonderful,
It gives you wings for soaring,
Gleams of stardust in your eyes,
Violins and scented sighs,
But in the long run, even paradise
Can be a little boring.

MONEY BLUES

Some folks have lots of money, some haven't got a
bean, //
When you have no money, Baby, life can be awfully
mean.

It's only bits of paper, it seems to come and
go, //
If the rent don't come in, Baby, you can go out
the door.

When you have lots of money, people will buzz
around, //
When you are broke and busted, you are nowhere
bound.

I'm a good girl, Papa, hold my head up high, //
But what do I do when I see the money rolling by.

Worked for my living, since I was two or three, //
Worked for my living; somebody's working me.

Like to think of Heaven, like the good book say, //
If I don't think of money, I can't get through
this day.

Well, someday I'll make it--fill that inside
straight, //
That's the day you'll see me walking through the
pearly gate.

THE DAY THE FREEWAY FROZE

'Twas at eight-o-five a.m.
On a hot old July day,
When a hiker got up on the Garfield Ramp
Where he wasn't supposed to be.
He was hit by a Fairlane Riviera
With automatic drive,
And a Chevrolet Bel Aire coupe,
And he didn't stay long alive.

On the day the freeway froze
In Los Angeles U.S.A.,
'Twas a wondrous affair,
And I wish I'd been there
On the day
The Freeway froze.

Well, the cars began to stop,
But the ramps kept feeding slow,
And a Plymouth hardtop Belvedere
Was smacked by a Dynaflo.
And some of them could have made it,
Going out on a ramp marked "In",
But nobody does the like of that
Because that is a cardinal sin.

Meantime down in town,
At the Spring Street underpass,
A couple of trucks collided,
And one had a load of gas.
It could have been a holocaust
Cause no one could turn about,
But the engines got up on the cloverleaf,
And they put that fire out.

On the day the freeway froze...

Well, the cars stood head to tail,
Except for a motorbike,
Cause bikes can go tearing between the lanes
And run wherever they like.
But somebody opened the door
Of his Mercromatic Ford,
And the motorbike and the driver alike,
They went to their last reward.

A plane from Bracken Field
Came to take a look by air,
And that plane cracked up by the Rosemead Ramp
And there was no exit there.
The sound of the sirens wailing
Drove some folks out of their cars,
And they scrambled down the freeway banks
And hid in the nearest bars.

On the day the freeway froze...

Mr. Gorbach sat at his wheel,
A hungry man was he,
And up ahead was an unmanned truck
From the big Helms Bakery.
He opened the drawer marked "D",
And found doughnuts glazed and plain,
And he pulled real hard and the drawer
flew out
And the doughnuts fell like rain.

Well, the people jumped around,
And the goughnuts soon were gone,
And Stanley Hackett he had ten,
But coffee he had none.
Then somebody found a truck
That was full of cows and steers,
And he opened the door and the cattle
strolled
Among the lanes and piers.

A bekins van was stalled,
And some ladies worked amin,
And they set themselves up in housekeeping
In the Harbor outbound lane,
And a truckload of brassieres
Was very quickly gone,
When they all cried "Viva Havana!"
And they tied the armbands on.

On the day the freeway froze...

The greatestest find of all
Was a wagonload of rum.
It was all dealt out with a generous hand
To whoever wanted some.
And a couple of guys they ran along
With car tops for their tracks,
Wearing "Fight Cancer!" sandwich boards
Which they carried front and back.

It was seven hours, they say,
Till the jam began to go.
The last lost car was towed away
After eighty hours or so.
Three thousand ice cream bars were sold
To the sound of the auto horn,

Twenty-three people died that day
And three little babes were born.

On the day the freeway froze...

These details can be found
In city police reports,
In interviews in the daily news
And the TV newsreel shorts,
And all I do is tell to you
The facts as they arose,
In the City of Los Angeles
The day the freeway froze.

THE DELINQUENT

Oh, the boy was on the bench,
And the judge was in the dock,
And the people on the jury were the people from the
block.

Well, Costello was the lawyer,
And De Sapio was there,
And they made a lot of motions
And their clamor filled the air.
And they said it was outrageous
That His Honor had to be
Hauled up before the common folk and forced to
make a plea.

But the boy was on the bench...

Well, the father of the boy,
He was prosecutor here,
And he made the accusation,
And he spoke up loud and clear,
And he pointed to the prisoner--
A member of the Bar--
And he said, "A crew of gangsters have put you
where you are."

And the boy was on the bench...

And he said, "I am a voter,
But my vote is less than straw,
For the gunmen, they elect you,
And they're way outside the law.
And the gangsters rule the city,
And they're gangsters, one and all,
From the financiers in Wall Street to the clowns
in City Hall."

And the boy was on the bench...

"So the boys in this big city
Learn their lesson, every one--
If you want to rule the Mayor
Then you have to shoot a gun.
So they form their little street-gangs
On the model that you give,
And the lesson that you teach them is, they have
to kill to live."

And the boy was on the bench...

"And their primer is the shakedown
From the time they shine a shoe,
And it's shake down or be shaken,
That's the rule they learn from you.
The machine that rules the city
Has no use for them at all,
Till they have a gang to offer that's as tough
as City Hall."

And the boy was on the bench...

"Do you dare to sit in judgement
On this thing that you have made?
It is time you wore the handcuffs,
And sat shivering afraid.
It is time to place the sentence
Where the sentence ought to be.
It is time for you to answer--
And I rest my case," said he.

And the boy was on the bench,
And the judge was in the dock,
And the people on the jury were the people from
the block.

MOMMY'S GIRL

This is the girl that Mommy loves,
This is the girl that Mommy loves,
This is the girl that Mommy loves,
Sweetest girl in town.

Up in the morning, break of day,
Into her clothes and out to play,
Breakfast somewhere along the way,
Bouncing up and down.

This is the girl that Mommy loves...

Now she's an engine, clear the track!
Now she's a hammer and smacks a tack,
Now she's a sack on a piggy-back,
Fifty cents a pound.

This is the girl that Mommy loves...

Now she's a Daddy and keeps a store,
Now she's a Mommy and sweeps the floor,
Now she's a girl in a pinafore
Ruffles all around.

This is the girl that Mommy loves...

Stars are out and it's time for bed,
Here's the pajamas, white and red,
Here's the pillow for sleepy-head,
Lay the beany down.

This is the girl that Mommy loves,
This is the girl that Mommy loves,
This is the girl that Mommy loves,
Sweetest girl in town.

THERE'LL COME A TIME

There'll come a time the smog will be so thick,
We'll all have to walk with a long white walking stick
But we won't walk anyhow--we'll go by air,
And the helicopters will be so thick we won't get
anywhere.

There'll come a time, believe me, son,
But when that day is here, I will be gone.

Such adulteration will have hit the food,
We'll throw away the contents and eat the carton if
we want anything good.
And women will live on synthetic meals,
And they'll all be slender as synthetic eels.

There'll come a time...

There'll come a time the kids will be so smart,
They'll be able to recite their own psychoanalysis
by heart.

And they'll all be scientists by the time they're
ten,
And thank the Lord I won't have any children then.

There'll come a time...

The cities will be so over populated,
We'll all be buried from the same apartment house
where we were created,
And if you take a trip to the country somewhere,
You'll have to be inoculated against fresh air.

There'll come a time...

There'll come a time we'll lose our walking feet,
And food will all be predigested, so we won't have
to eat,
And children will be born in test-tubes, so we
won't have to wed,
And thank God by that time I will be dead.

There'll come a time,
Won't you be proud!
And by that time I'll be playing an
unamplified harp on an eighteenth
century cloud.

SOMEWHERE BETWEEN

On Monday I think I'm a sinner,
On Tuesday I think I'm a saint,
On Wednesday I don't know what I am,
But I know that a saint I aint.

Somewhere between the good and the evil,
Somewhere between the right and the wrong,
Somewhere between the kind and the mean,
Somewhere between,
Is where I belong.

On Monday I'd steal from a baby,
On Tuesday I'd give you my shirt,
On Wednesday I lie on my couch and moan
Cause my conscience is doing me dirt.

Somewhere between the good and the evil...

On Monday I rail at my kinfolk,
On Tuesday I'm gentle and good,
On Wednesday I wonder and count every blunder,
And wish that I knew where I stood.

Somewhere between the good and the evil...

If I could just peek at the record,
I'd know if it's mucky or clean,
I'd know if I'm destined for heaven or hell,
Or to float like a bird in between.

Somewhere between the good and the evil...

I LIVE IN A CITY

I live in a city, yes I do,
I live in a city, yes I do,
I live in a city, yes I do,
Made by human hands.

Black hands, white hands, yellow and brown
All together, built this town.
Black hands, white hands, yellow and brown
All together make the wheels go round.

I live in a city...

White hands, yellow hands, brown and black
Mined the coal and built the stack,
White hands, yellow hands, brown and black
Built the engine and laid the track.

I live in a city...

Black hands, yellow hands, brown and white
Built the buildings tall and bright,
Black hands, yellow hands, brown and white
Fill them all with shining light.

I live in a city...

Black hands, white hands, brown and tan
Mill the flour and clean the pan,
Black hands, white hands, brown and tan,
The working woman and the working man.

I live in a city...

THE LITTLE LAND

In Ireland, in Ireland, the leprechauns abound,
They'll dazzle you and promise you, and lead you
by the hand,
Into their little land, underneath the ground.

When you're in the Little Land,
They fill your hands with gold,
You think you stay for just a day,
You come out bent and old.

Dead leaves in your pockets,
Oh, my enchanted, have a care!
Run, run from the Little Folk
Or you'll have dead leaves in your pockets
And snowflakes on your hair.

When you're in the Little Land,
You watch the wee folk play,
You see them through a game or two,
You come out old and gray.

Dead leaves in your pockets...

Lights shine in the Little Land
From diamonds on the wall,
But when you're back on the brown hill side,
It's cold pebbles after all.

Dead leaves in your pockets...

Music in the Little Land,
It makes the heart rejoice,
It charms your ear so you cannot hear
The sound of your true love's voice.

Dead leaves in your pockets,
Oh, my enchanted, have a care!
Run, run from the Little Folk,
Or you'll have dead leaves in your pockets
And snowflakes on your hair.

OH, DOCTOR!

Oh, I wish I was a doctor, not a barroom troubadour,
I wish I had an office on the forty-second floor,
Where ladies in the ante room, so stylish and so pert,
All wait their turn to tell me where they hurt.

Oh, doctor, hold my hand.
Oh, doctor, I ache all over.
Oh, doctor, you're so nice,
And you give such good advice,

I don't even mind the price cause you're so
grand.

Oh, doctor, hold my hand.

Oh, doctor, you're so sweet.
With you on call, a sickness is a treat.
It could be psychosomatic,
Caused by birdies in my attic,
Still you make it so dramatic, I expand.
Oh, doctor, hold my hand.

Oh, doctor, I'm off my feed.
I can hardly eat but three poor meals a day.
I'd get back my appetite
If you'd feed me day and night,
Then I might endure a bite of something bland.
Oh, doctor, hold my hand.

Oh, doctor, I'm not well.
Oh, doctor, I've got a fever.
It could be a mild infection
That requires an injection--
Streptomycin's what I mean, you understand.
Oh, doctor, hold my hand.

Oh, doctor, your pills are just too cute.
I really don't know what I'd do without them.
Some are scented with vanilla--
I just keep them on my pilla,
Or I wear them for a necklace on a band.
Oh, doctor, hold my hand.

Oh, doctor, write me a prescription,
A little billet-doux from you to me.
Call me back another day--
I get well when I'm away--
It's so boring being healthy, strong and tanned!
Oh, doctor, hold my hand.

Oh, doctor, I'm just low.
Oh, doctor, I need attention.
If you think I need diversion,
I could take a nice excursion
Where the A.M.A. convention's being planned,
Cause I love to have a doctor hold my hand.

SING ALONG

I get butterflies in my stomach
Whenever I start to sing,
And when I'm at a microphone,
I shake like anything.
But if you'll sing along with me,
I'll holler right out loud,
Cause I'm awfully nervous lonesome,
But I'm swell when I'm a crowd.

Sing along,
Sing along,
And just sing, "La la la la la"
If you don't know the song,
You'll quickly learn the music,
You'll find yourself a word,
Cause when we sing together we'll be heard.

Oh, when I need a raise in pay,
And have to tell my boss,
If I go see him by myself,
I'm just a total loss,
But if we go together,
I'll do my part right pretty,
Cause I'm awfully nervous lonesome,
But I make a fine committee.

Sing along, sing along...

My congressman's important,
He hobnobs with Big Biz,
He soon forgets the guys and gals
That put him where he is.
I'll just write him a letter
That peace is what we need,
With a hundred thousand signatures,
Why, even he can read.

Sing along, sing along...

Oh, life is full of problems,
The world's a funny place,
I often wonder why the hell
I joined the human race.
But when we work together,
It all seems right and true;
I'm an awful nothing by myself,
But I'm okay with you.

Sing along, sing along...

THE MIRACLE

Oh, what a piece of work is man,
How marvelously wrought,
The deft contrivance of his hand,
The wonder of his thought!

Why need we look for miracles
Outside of nature's laws,
When Man is what to wonder at
With every breath he draws.

But give him room to move and grow,
But give his spirit play,
And he can make a world of light
Out of the common clay.