

PC 7548

# I'll Sing You a Story sung by Sam Hinton

*Folk ballads for the young*



M  
1997  
H666  
I29  
1972

MUSIC LP



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*folk*  
**We Sing You a Story**  
*Sung by*  
**Sam Hinton**  
*Ballads for the young*

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# I'll Sing You a Story

## Folk Ballads for Young Folks

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### SIDE 1.

#### 1. Old Bangum

This little song is about all that's left of a long old ballad from the British Isles. It used to tell a complicated story of a brave knight named Sir Lionel, who fought with a wild boar belonging to a wicked giant with magical powers. In this East Texas version, the giant has disappeared, along with his magic. It sounds a little as if Old Bangum were supposed to be a child, partly because he uses a "wooden knife" in his fight against the wild boar. In older versions, however, he used a "woodsman's knife", which is something quite different.

Old Bangum would a-hunting ride,  
Dillum down, dillum;  
Old Bangum would a-hunting ride,  
Dillum down.  
Old Bangum would a-hunting ride,  
With sword and pistol by his side.  
Cubby ki, cuddle dum,  
Killy, quo quam.

"There is a wild boar in these woods,"  
Dillum down, dillum.

"There is a wild boar in these woods,"  
Dillum down.

"There is a wild boar in these woods  
Who breaks men's bones and drinks their blood."  
Cubby ki, cuddle dum,  
Killy, quo quam.

Old Bangum took his wooden knife  
(Nonsense words and repeats as above)  
And he swore he'd take that wild boar's life.

At last he came to the wild boar's den,  
And he found the bones of a thousand men.

They fought four hours in that day,  
Till the wild boar fled and slunk away.

"Old Bangum, did you win or lose?"  
And he swore, by Jove, he'd won the shoes.

#### 2. Brian O'Lynn

About four hundred years ago, somebody in England probably made up this song to poke fun at the Irish people. But it didn't work out the way the composer intended, for the Irish took it over as their own song, changing the words so that Brian O'Lynne didn't look foolish at all, but was shown to be a cheerful, resourceful, and clever fellow indeed.

Brian O'Lynn had no breeches to wear;  
He got an old sheepskin and made him a pair.  
With the skinny side out and the furry side in;  
"They'll be charming and cool!" said Brian O'Lynn.

Brian O'Lynn had no shirt to his back.  
He went to the neighbor's, and borrowed a sack.  
He puckered the mouth of it under his chin --  
"Sure, they'll take them for ruffles!" said Brian O'Lynn.

Brian O'Lynn had no hat to put on,  
Till he went to the dump-heap and found him one.  
It had none of the crown left and less of the brim,  
"But there's fine ventilation!" said Brian O'Lynn.

Brian O'Lynn he did not have a coat,  
So he borrowed the skin of a neighbor's goat.  
The two horns stuck out from his sides, "But then --  
They'll think I've got pistols!" said Brian O'Lynn.

Brian O'Lynn had no watch to put on,  
So he scooped out a turnip and made him one.  
He slipped a young cricket in under the skin;  
"Now they'll think it's a-ticking!" said Brian O'Lynn.

Brian O'Lynn to his house had no door.  
He'd the sky for a roof and the bog for a floor.  
He'd a way to jump out and a way to swim in --  
"'Tis a fine habitation!" said Brian O'Lynn.

Brian O'Lynn and his wife and wife's mother  
Were all going home o'er the bridge together.  
The bridge it broke down and they all tumbled in;  
"We'll walk home on the bottom!" said Brian O'Lynn.

Brian O'Lynn and his wife's mother --  
They both fell into the fire together.  
And Brian, beneath, he got a burnt skin --  
"Take turn about, Mother!" cried Brian O'Lynn.

Brian O'Lynn and his wife and wife's mother,  
They all slept in one bed together.  
The night it was cold and the blanket was thin;  
"Well, I'll sleep in the middle!" said Brian O'Lynn.

#### 3. Three Jolly Rogues of Lynne

In the old days, people used to take their grain and their corn to the miller to have it ground into flour and corn-meal; they took their yarn to the weaver, who wove it into cloth for them, and their cloth went to the man who sewed up their clothes, the tailor. People didn't use money then as much as they do now; the miller and the weaver and the tailor didn't get cash, but kept part of what they made for the use of their families and themselves. Most of these craftsmen were honest, or they couldn't have staid in business very long; just the same, their customers made a lot of jokes about how they always kept out more than their share. And whenever you hear a folksong or a folk tale about a miller or a weaver or a tailor, you can be pretty sure that something unpleasant will happen to him . . . In this old song, which was brought over from England before the Revolution, you have all three of them. I learned it years ago from Rich Dehr and Frank Miller:

In good old Colony days,  
When we lived under the King,  
There was a miller and a weaver and a little tailor,  
Three jolly rogues of Lynne.

Three jolly rogues of Lynne.  
Three jolly rogues of Lynne.  
There was a miller and a weaver and a little tailor,  
Three jolly rogues of Lynne.

Now the miller, he stole corn,  
And the weaver he stole yarn.  
And the little tailor stole good broadcloth  
For to keep those three rogues warm.

Just to keep those three rogues warm;  
For to keep those three rogues warm.  
Oh, the little tailor stole good broadcloth  
For to keep those three rogues warm.

But the miller drowned in his dam,  
And the weaver hanged in his yarn,  
And the Devil got his paw on the little tailor  
With his broadcloth under his arm.

With his broadcloth under his arm.  
With his broadcloth under his arm.  
Oh, the Devil got his paw on the little tailor  
With his broadcloth under his arm.

#### 4. Jonathan Smith

Here is a recent ballad on an old subject -- the adventures of Captain John Smith. As so often happens, the new words are sung to a fine old tune. The words were made up by a law professor at Columbia University -- Prof. Karl N. Llewellyn, about 1920; the tune is the Irish "When Johnny Comes Marching Home." Historians will tell you that this story of John Smith and Pocahontas never really happened, but it's a good tale anyhow . . . .

Three hundred years ago or more --  
So runs the ancient tale --  
A captain sailed from England's shore  
And he was stout and hale.  
He'd fought the French and he'd fought the Dutch,  
And the Russians and Squussians and Prussians and such;  
And when he'd finished, they needed a crutch --  
For his name was Jonathan Smith.  
His name was Jonathan, Jonathan, Jonathan, Jonathan Smith.

The crowd he was with, both young and old,  
Were gentlemen neat and fine;  
They came to this country to hunt for gold,  
They were eager to own a mine.  
But they didn't like work,  
They hated the dirt,  
And they quit the minute their blisters hurt --  
And yet they yelled for double dessert!  
They were not like Jonathan Smith.  
They were not like Jonathan, Jonathan, Jonathan, Jonathan Smith.

They feasted and piled the pyrites high  
Till their glimmering hopes were doomed.  
The food was getting extremely shy  
While the gentlemen glumped and gloomed.  
But Captain John pitched into the crew,  
And he found each gentleman work to do,  
With nothing to eat till the job was through --  
For his name was Jonathan Smith.  
His name was Jonathan, Jonathan, Jonathan, Jonathan Smith.

When the Indians heard about his fame  
They streaked the war-paint on;  
And while old John was stalking game,  
The tribe was stalking John!  
Well, he fought as he'd often fought before,  
And he settled the hash of a dozen or more;  
But a war-club caught him across the jaw --  
And they captured Jonathan Smith.  
They captured Jonathan, Jonathan, Jonathan,  
Jonathan Smith.

And now, by all the Indian laws,  
The gauntlet he had to run.  
The Chieftain's wife and his mother-in-law  
Came out to see the fun.  
Lined up in an alley the Indians stood,  
Brandishing clubs and yelling for blood;  
And Jonathan thought that his name was Mudd,  
Instead of Jonathan Smith!  
Instead of Jonathan, Jonathan, Jonathan,  
Jonathan Smith.

The first one aimed a terrible swat,  
But John was never a dub;  
He sank his fist in the Indian's pot  
And he grabbed away his club.  
And oh boy! But the fight was hot  
As he battled his way to the end of the lot,  
And I tell you, he gave as good as he got,  
Did Captain Jonathan Smith.  
Did Captain Jonathan, Jonathan, Jonathan,  
Jonathan Smith.

But Captain John was all alone,  
And they downed him with a rush;  
They placed his head on a likely stone  
And got it ready to squush.  
But Pocahontas, the Chieftain's daughter --  
Well, maybe she took to him more than she oughter,  
And forgot everything that her mama had taught her  
For the love of Jonathan Smith.  
For the love of Jonathan, Jonathan, Jonathan,  
Jonathan Smith.

She leapt like a doe to Captian John  
And his cheek to hers she drew.  
"Lay on, if you must!" she panted, "Lay on!  
But you'll have to squush me too!"  
She pestered the Indians John to save  
And they turned him loose rather than hear her rave;  
So it pays to be handsome as well as brave,  
Like Captain Jonathan Smith.  
Like Captain Jonathan, Jonathan, Jonathan, Jonathan Smith!

#### 5. The Old Man in the Wood

There are lots of old stories and songs about a husband and wife arguing as to who does the most work. Most of them, like this one, tell how they trade jobs for a day or two, and the old gentleman always comes out the loser.

There was an old man who lived in the wood,  
As you can plainly see,  
Who said he could do more work in a day  
Than his wife could do in three.  
"If that be so," the old woman said,  
"Then this you must allow:  
You shall do my work for a day  
While I go follow the plow.

"Now, don't forget to milk the cow,  
For fear she should go dry;  
And you must feed the little pigs  
That are within the sty.  
And you must watch the bracket hen  
Lest she should lay astray,  
And you must wind the ball of yarn  
That I spun yesterday."

The old woman took the reins in her hand,  
And went out to drive the plow.  
The old man took the pail in his hand  
And went to milk the cow.  
But Tiny hunched and Tiny flinched  
And Tiny she turned up her nose;  
She gave the old man such a kick on the shin  
That the blood ran down to his toes.



It's "Hey, my good cow!" and "Ho, my good cow!  
You silly cow -- stand still!  
If ever I milk this creature again,  
"Twill be against my will!"  
And when he'd milked the tiny cow  
For fear she should go dry --  
He plumb forgot to feed the pigs  
That were within the sty.

And then he watched the bracket hen  
Lest she should lay astray;  
But he forgot the ball of yarn  
That his wife spun yesterday.  
He swore by all the leaves on the tree  
And all the stars in Heaven,  
That his wife could do more work in a day  
Than he could do in seven!

## 6. When You Go a-Courting

Back in the old frontier days, fathers used to keep a mighty close watch on their daughters, who were never allowed (if the fathers could help it) to be together with young men unless the father or mother were there too. This song tells of a brave young fellow who heard that the old folks were away from home, and called upon the daughters. Unfortunately, the old man came home while the boy was still there, and he was sorry he'd ever done such a thing, and plans never to do so again.

When you go a-courting, I'll tell you where to go:  
Down to the old man's house below,  
With the little kids snickering, and the old folks gone,  
And the big girls mad with their hair not combed --  
The big girls mad, with their hair not combed.

Old dirty clothes was a-lying 'round the room;  
The room not swept, 'cause they couldn't find the broom.  
They had a long-tailed coat, Lord, greasy all around,  
And a old leather bonnet with a hole in the crown --  
A old leather bonnet with a hole in the crown.

Took me in the parlor and they started playing games.  
Every few minutes, they said "What is your name?"  
Kept a-saying it was Johnny, and they seemed satisfied,  
'Cause they laughed and they giggled and they giggled  
till they cried --  
They laughed and they giggled and they giggled till they  
cried !

They took me in the kitchen and invited me to eat,  
But they never had a thing but a little piece of meat.  
They had a old dull knife, and a little bitty fork --  
Well, I sawed for half an hour and I never made a mark!  
I sawed for half an hour and I never made a mark.

They said "Young feller, now we think you'd better wait,"  
But I sawed a little longer till I got it off my plate.  
Sawed a little longer till I got it on the floor,  
And I up with my foot and I kicked it out the door --  
I up with my foot, and I kicked it out the door.

Then they said "Young feller, now we think you better run,  
'Cause yonder comes Pappy with a double-barrelled gun!"  
Well, I stood there and fought him, as brave as any bear,  
And I tangled my fingers in the old man's hair --  
I tangled my fingers in the old man's hair.

Well, he blacked my eye and he punched me in the nose,  
He grabbed my collar and he tore my clothes;  
He kicked me in the breeches and he threw me out the door --  
And I swore, by gosh, I'll never go there any more --  
I swore by gosh, I'll never go there any more!

## 7. Grandmother Brown

This kindly old lady, who refused to say anything mean about anybody, including old Satan himself, is the heroine of lots of verses and tales. This version was taught me by my mother, who learned it when she was a girl in Gatesville, Texas.

Dear Grandmother Brown lived in Cranberry Town,  
And a kindly old lady was she;  
There was no one so bad, neither lassie nor lad,  
But some good in the same she could see.  
One fine afternoon, Mistress Polly Muldoon  
Just dropped in for the "moment" that ends  
In an hour or more, and did naught but talk o'er  
The shortcomings of neighbors and friends.

But in vain did she scold about young folk and old;  
Only patient excuses she heard.  
Till at last she cried out -- "You would say, I've no doubt,  
For the Devil himself a good word!"  
Then said Grandmother Brown of Cranberry Town,  
"Well, whatever his failings may be,  
I'm sure you won't find many persons who mind  
Their own business as closely as he!"

## 8. The Farmer and the Crow

This has been a popular folksong for hundreds of years, and is still sung in many parts of the country. In England, a song known as "The Carrion Crow" was sung before Columbus discovered America; "The Farmer and the Crow" is a different version of the same song-- and not so very different, at that. I learned it from Sam Eskin, who learned it in Texas. The chorus doesn't mean a thing, but it's fun to sing. Come on and sing it !

As I was a-going on down to the spring,  
Come a lean down, Billy down, ki-o may,  
I heard those little birds whistle and sing,  
Come a lean down, Billy down, ki-o may.  
Ki fa neero, gilt a geero, ki fa neero,  
Up jump Billy down, lean down Billy-lilly,  
Crawl down Billy down -- ki-o may!

I saw a crow a-settin' on a oak,  
Come a lean down, Billy down, ki-o may,  
A-watching a tailor mending his coat,  
Come a lean down, Billy down, ki-o may.  
Ki fa neero, gilt a geero, ki fa neero,  
Up jump Billy down, lean down Billy-lilly,  
Crawl down Billy down -- ki-o may !

I says to my wife "Now bring me my gun;  
And I'll shoot that crow before he can run."

The gun went "bang!", but I missed my mark,  
And I shot my old sow right smack through the heart.

I says to my wife, "Oh, come here quick!  
'Cause our old sow's in a TURRible fix!"

I says to my wife "Let's take her to the house,  
And we'll have sausage, and we'll have souse."

I'll make me a saddle all out of her skin,  
And I'll have that pommel right up to my chin.

My saddle and bridle are all on the shelf;  
If you want any more, you can sing it yourself !

## 9. The Crow Song

This one I learned from a phonograph record when I was a kid, back in the days when the "Farm Relief" program was an important part of the news. I later forgot most of the words, and had to make them up again as best I could.

You've heard this talk about the Farm Relief --  
Well, I want to tell you about a thief.  
He steals from the farmer all he makes,  
Though the farmer works till his poor back aches.  
He plants his corn down in the ground,  
And the darned old crows come flying down.  
When he comes back at the break of day,  
They've eat his crops and flown away.

CHORUS:

Now Papa Crow sits on a limb;  
Caw, Caw, Caw !  
And Mama Crow sits next to him;  
Caw, Caw, Caw !  
The little Crows join in the song,  
Squeak, Squeak, Squeak !  
Then they all get together and the whole day long --  
It's Caw, Caw, Caw !

When the farmer goes to the field with a gun,  
The crows all see it and away they run.  
But when without his gun he goes,  
You can't see the cornfield for the crows.  
The farmer yells "You ornery crew!  
I wish I was a black crow just like you!"  
But a crow in the cornfield tells him "No;  
You ain't got the brains to be a crow ! "

CHORUS:

## 10. Hambone

"Hambone" rhythms are done by slapping your hands on your lap and your chest, and by hitting the back of one hand with the palm of the other. Some talented people -- such as Mrs. Bessie Jones of Simon's Island, Georgia -- can do marvelous rhythms this way; and I have heard groups of kids who could do them all exactly together, their hands moving up and down at exactly the same time . . . . It's a great thing to watch, and to hear! The words I do here are mostly "floating stanzas," sometimes sung in songs and sometimes recited this way to the hambone rhythm. Most of them I learned from Mrs. Jones.

Hambone, Hambone, how do you do?  
Very well, thank you; how are you?

Hambone, Hambone, where have you been?  
Around the world and back again.

Hambone, Hambone, what do you know?  
I just got back from the movie show.

Hambone, Hambone, what did you see?  
I saw Bob Hope, but he didn't see me.

Hambone, Hambone, where did you go?  
I hopped up to Miss Lucy's door.

I got down on my bended knee  
And asked Miss Lucy would she marry me.

Hambone, Hambone, what did she say?  
We had our wedding on the very next day.

The first walked in was a big black snake;  
He ate up all that wedding cake.

Then in walked old Mr. Louse --  
He danced a breakdown 'round that house.

Then in flew old Mr. Bug;  
He crawled all over that liquor jug.

The last to come was Mr. Tick,  
And he ate so much till it made him sick.

Hambone, Hambone, sing me a song.  
Sing it yourself, 'cause I got to go along.

And a ham . . . .

And a ham . . . .

And a ham . . . .

And a ham . . . .

## SIDE 2.

### 1. The Boll Weevil

The boll weevil is a bad little insect that destroys cotton before it's picked; in some years, it has destroyed crops worth billions of dollars. There weren't any boll weevils in the United States until about 60 years ago, and when they suddenly appeared, everyone said they had come up from Mexico. The people who depended for their living upon cotton were very hard hit indeed, and many of them had to give up their farms and their homes; but they still had the courage to make up this cheerful song about it. This was one of the first songs I learned when I was a boy in Crockett, Texas, which is in the eastern part of the state, where they grow a tremendous amount of cotton. The boll weevil hasn't really been licked to this day, and people still sing this song.

Oh, the boll weevil is a little black bug  
Come from Mexico, they say;  
Come all the way to Texas  
Just a-looking for a place to stay.  
CHO. Just a-looking for a home --  
Just a-looking for a home.

Well, the farmer take that boll weevil  
And he put him in the red-hot sand.  
And the little bug say "This is mighty hot,  
But I'll stand it like man!  
This'll be my home,  
This is gonna be home."

So the farmer take the boll weevil  
And he freeze him in a lump of ice.  
But the little bug say to the farmer --  
"Woo! This is MIGHTY cool and nice!  
This'll be my home,  
This is gonna be home."

So the farmer take that boll weevil  
And he throw him in the fire.  
But the little bug say to the farmer --  
"Here I are, boy! Here I are!  
Done found myself a home;  
Done found myself a home."

And then the boll weevil say to the farmer,  
"Now you better let me alone;  
I done eat all your cotton up  
And I'll start in on your corn,  
So's I can have a home,  
So's I can have a home."

And the boll weevil say to the doctor  
"Don't bother making up no pills.  
'Cause when I get through with that farmer  
He can't pay no doctor bills.  
I'm gonna get his home,  
I'm gonna have his home."

### 2. The Gray Goose

I learned this song from a Library of Congress recording. "Iron Head" Baker -- one of the finest singers I have ever had the pleasure of hearing -- recorded it for John and Alan Lomax in a Texas prison. The basic story is a sort of tall tale about a goose who couldn't be stopped: he was too tough for everybody. After all that was done to him, the song ends with the gray goose flying away, followed by a flock of his own children. Alan Lomax suggests that this is all symbolic of the Negro people, who have survived slavery and all the other terrible things that have been done to them, and that Mr. Baker (himself a Negro) probably recognized the symbolism when he sang the song. . . . Everybody should join in on the chorus.

Well, a one Monday morning,  
Lord, Lord, Lord;  
Well, a one Monday morning,  
Lord, Lord, Lord.



Oh, my pappy went a-hunting,  
Lord . . . ETC.

He took along his shotgun,

And along came a gray goose.

He r'ared the hammer 'way back.

And the gun went "Ka-boo-loo!"

Down he come a-winding.

He was six weeks a-falling.

We put him in the wagon.

Well, a your wife and my wife --

Had a feather-picking.

They was six weeks a-picking.

Then we put him on to parboil.

He was six weeks a-boiling.

We put him on the table.

But the fork wouldn't stick him,  
Nor the knife wouldn't cut him.

So we throwed him in the pig-pen.

But he broke the sow's jawbone.

So we taken him to the sawmill.

But he broke the saw's teeth out.

Well, the last time I seen him

He was flying across the ocean

With a long string of goslings.

They was going "Quing, quong quack!"  
Lord, Lord, Lord.

### 3. Mary Had a William Goat

You will, of course, recognize this as a version -- a parody version -- of "Mary Had a Little Lamb." The original song was written in 1830 by Mrs. Josepha Hale of Boston. I don't know who made up the parody, or when he did it, but we sang it in the 1920's.

Mary had a William Goat,  
William Goat, William Goat;  
Mary had a William Goat,  
And its stomach was lined with zinc.

It followed her to school one day,  
School one day, school one day;  
Followed her to school one day,  
And drank a pint of ink.

One day it ate an oyster can,  
Oyster can, oyster can;  
One day it ate an oyster can  
And a clothesline full of shirts.

Now shirts can do no harm inside,  
Harm inside, harm inside;  
Shirts can do no harm inside --  
But an oyster can !

The can was full of dynamite,  
Dynamite, dynamite;  
The can was full of dynamite  
Which Billy thought was cheese.

Hé rubbed against poor Mary's legs,  
Mary's legs, Mary's legs;  
He rubbed against poor Mary's legs,  
But the pain he could not ease.

A sudden flash of girl and goat,  
Girl and goat, girl and goat;  
A sudden flash of girl and goat,  
And they no more wereseen.

Mary's soul to Heaven went,  
Heaven went, Heaven went.  
Mary's soul to Heaven went,  
But Billy's went to - -

Whoop de doodle doodle doo,  
Doodle doo, doodle doo,  
Whoop de doodle doodle doo --  
Billy's went to Heaven too!

### 4. Twenty Froggies

Here is another one that my mother and father used to sing to all us kids when we were little, and my sisters and I have often sung it to our kids, too.

Twenty froggies went to school  
Down beside the rushy pool.  
Twenty little coats of green;  
Twenty vests all white and clean.

"We must be on time," said they;  
"First we study, then we play.  
That is how we mind the rule  
When we froggies go to school."

Master Bullfrog, grave and stern,  
Taught the classes in their turn.  
Taught them how to nobly strive,  
Also how to leap and dive.

Taught them how to dodge the blows  
From the sticks that bad boys throw.  
From his seat upon the log,  
Taught them how to say "kerchog!"

Not one dunce among the lot;  
Not one lesson they forgot,  
Polished to a high degree  
As each froggy ought to be.

Little froggies grow up fast;  
Bullfrogs they become at last.  
Now they sit on other logs,  
Teaching other little frogs.

### 5. When I Was a Little Boy

There is an old English song very much like this one, and it came over to this country with some of the people that settled in the Southern Mountains, probably 'way back in the 1700's. They've been singing it in both places ever since. The remarkable thing is that after 200 years of not hearing each other sing, they still do it in so much the same way in both countries. It doesn't make any sense no matter WHERE it's sung, and it isn't supposed to. This American version is from the Ozarks.

When I was a little boy -- (Whistle)  
When I was a little boy, so fat I couldn't go,  
They set me on a fence post, there to make a show.  
Sing a tie, sing a tie, sing a tilla roddle diddle day,  
Tie, sing a tie, sing a tilla roddle day.

Along came a giant --  
Along came a giant; he was twenty hazards high,  
And the hair on his head brushed up against the sky.  
Sing a tie, ETC.

He bannered me to wrestle --  
He bannered me to wrestle, and I throwed him to the ground;  
Beat him at his own game, shot him with his own gun.  
Tie, sing a tie, ETC.

I put on his coat --  
Put on his coat, it was twenty acres square,  
And in the side pocket found a million dollars there!  
Sing a tie, ETC.

I bought a little doggie --  
Bought a little dog and his color was dun;  
He was teen feet long, and his head weighed a ton.  
Sing a tie, ETC.

I bought a little chicken --  
Bought a little chicken, and I took her to the fair,  
I set her on a mussel -- and she hatched out a hare!  
Sing a tie, ETC.

The hare growed up --  
Growed into a mule who wastwenty hazards high;  
And the man that tells a bigger tale will have to tell a lie!  
Sing a tie, ETC.

## 6. I Was Born a Hundred Thousand Years Ago

Here is a real tall tale in song. It probably started in the middle 1800's as a comic song to be sung on the stage. Since then, it has spread all over the country, and lots of people have made up new verses for it; most singers, like me, never sing it twice the same way.

I was born a hundred thousand years ago,  
And there's nothing in this world that I don't know.  
I saw Peter, Paul, and Moses  
Playing Ring Around the Roses,  
And I can lick the guy that says it isn't so.

I was there when Satan looked the garden o'er;  
I saw Adam and Eve driven from the door.  
I was in the bushes peeking  
While the apple they was eating,  
And I'll swear that I'm the guy that ate the core.

I saw Jonah when he shoved off in the whale,  
And I thought he'd never live to tell the tale.  
But old Jonah had eaten garlic,  
And it gave the whale a colic --  
So he coughed him up and let him out of jail.

I saw Absalom a-hanging by his hair.  
When they built the Wall of China, I was there.  
I saved King Solomon's life,  
And he offered me a wife.  
And I said "You're talking business; have a chair!"

I saw Israel at the Battle of the Nile,  
When the arrows they were flying fast and wild.  
I saw David with his sling  
Pop Goliath on the wing --  
While I was doing forty seconds to the mile.

I taught Solomon his little ABC's;  
I helped Brigham Young invent Limburger cheese.  
And while sailing down the bay  
With Methusaleh one day,  
I saved his flowing whiskers from the breeze.

I saw Sampson when he laid the village cold.  
I saw Daniel tame the lions in the hold.  
I helped build the Tower of Babel  
Up as high as they were able --  
And there's lots of other things I haven't told!

Queen Elizabeth, she fell in love with me;  
We were married in Milwaukee secretly.  
But then I up and shook her,  
And I went with General Hooker  
For to shhot mosquitoes down in Tennessee.

## 7. Ain't We Crazy?

Of all the silly songs I know, this is the silliest. I've known it practically all my life, having learned while a very small boy when visiting my Uncle Bill Duffie in Ada, Oklahoma: he had it on a phonograph record. There is a joke or pun in almost every line, although some of them use old-fashioned words and themes that are not as funny now as they used to be . . . .

Oh, I have a little ditty, it's as crazy as can be;  
The guy that wrote it said he wanted it, and handed it to me.  
But I found I couldn't use it, just because it sounded blue,  
And that's the very reason why I'm handing it to you.

It's a song the alligators sing while coming through the rye,  
As they serenade the elephants up in the trees so high.  
The iceman hums this ditty as he shovels in the coal,  
And the monkeys join the chorus up around the northern Pole.

CHO: Ain't we crazy? Ain't we crazy!  
This is the way we pass the time away.  
Ain't we crazy? Ain't we crazy?  
We're going to sing this song all night today.

It was midnight on the ocean, not a street car was in sight,  
And the sun was shining brightly, for it rained all day that night.

'Twas a summer night in winter and the rain was snowing fast,  
And a barefoot boy with shoes on stood a-sitting in the grass.

It was evening, and the rising sun was setting in the west,  
And the little fishes in the trees were huddled in their nests;  
The rain was pouring down, and the moon was shining bright,  
And everything that you could see was hidden out of sight.

While the cows were making cowslips, and the bells were wringing wet,  
And the bumblebees were making bums and smoking cigarettes,  
A man slept in a stable and came out a little hoarse --  
So he hopped upon his golf-sticks and drove all around the course.

While the organ pealed potatoes, lard was rendered by the choir,  
And the sexton wrung the dishrag, someone set the church on fire;  
"Holy smoke!" th preacher shouted. In the rain he lost his hair --  
Now his head resembles Heaven, for there is no parting there.

CHORUS:

It was midnight on the ocean, not a horse-car was in sight,  
As I stepped into a drug store to get myself a light.  
The man behind the counter was a woman old and gray  
Who used to peddle shoestrings on the road to Mandalay.

"Good evening, sir!" the woman said, and her eyes were bright with tears,  
As she put her head beneath her feet and stood that way for years.  
Her children six were orphans, all except one tiny tot  
Who lives in the house across the street upon the vacant lot!

CHORUS;

## 8. Zebra Dun

Ever since some humans started being specialists, and getting to be expert in their own fields, they've gotten a big bang out of demonstrating their superiority by playing jokes on poor folks that WEREN'T experts. This song tells how a bunch of expert cowboys tried to play such a joke on a man who turned out not to be as inexperienced as they thought. "Zebra Dun" is the name of a horse; "dun" is a color, and "Zebra" probably comes from the old "Z-Bar" Ranch.



We were camped on the plains at the head of the Cimarron,  
When along came a stranger and he stopped to argue some.  
He hadn't had his breakfast, so we handed him a plate,  
And we stood around a-listening while the stranger talked  
and ate.

He talked a mile a minute, and his thoughts just came in  
herds;

He astonished all us punchers with his educated words.  
He talked about old Shakespeare while he downed his pork  
and beans,  
And while he ate his biscuits, it was foreign kings and  
queens.

He drank a cup of coffee, but he never missed a word --  
Such a lot of education us punchers never heard!  
He looked so awful foolish we began to look around  
To see what sort of a joke to play on this tenderfoot  
from town.

He told us he had lost his job upon the Seven-D,  
And was striking out across the plains to hit the Santa Fe.  
He didn't say how come it -- just some trouble with the boss,  
But he asked if he could borrow a nice fat saddle hoss.

This tickled all the boys to death; they laughed right up  
their sleeve.  
"Sure, you can borrow a fine hoss, as fat as ever you please!"  
Shorty took his lariat to rope the Zebra Dun  
And get the saddle on him, while we waited for the fun.

Now, old Dunny was an outlaw, and had got so awful wild  
He could paw the moon down; he could jump a mile!  
But now he stood there quiet just as if he didn't know,  
While we got the saddle on him, and ready for to go.

When the stranger hit the saddle, then old Dunny quit the  
earth,  
A-travelling right straight up for all that he was worth,  
A-pitching and a-squealing, and a-throwing wall-eyed fits,  
His hind feet perpendicular, his front feet in the bits.

We could see the tops of mountains under Dunny at every jump,  
But the stranger sat upon him, just like a camel's hump!  
He sat upon the saddle, and he twirled his black mustache,  
Just like a summer boarder sits when waiting for the hash.

He thumped him in the shoulders, and he spurred him when  
he whirled,  
And he hollered to the punchers "I'm the wolf of the world!"  
By the time he had dismounted and stood upon the ground,  
We knew he was a thoroughbred, and NOT a gent from town.

The boss had been a-standing there and looking at the show;  
He stepped up to the stranger and he says "You needn't go;  
If you can throw the lasso like you rode old Zebra Dun,  
You're the man that I've been looking for since the year  
One.

There's one thing and a sure thing I've learned since I've  
been born:  
Every educated feller ain't a plumb greenhorn!

## 9. See the Steamer Go 'round the Bend

My father was one of the best verse-improvisors I've ever known.  
He was especially good at parodies. There was a sort of family  
game built around this ability: we would tease him, and say  
that he didn't know a certain rhyme or song, and he would an-  
swer, in a pretending-to-be-hurt way, "Of course I know it!  
I'll prove it" and then recite one of his parodies. One that  
we always remembered arose this way over a nursery rhyme, and  
Dad's "proving" version came out like this:

Hi diddle doot, the dog and the flute,  
The bull jumped over the sun,  
The little cat laughed to see such a leap,  
And said: "You sonofagun!"

One of my earliest -- and pleasantest -- memories is of Dad  
singing to me at night, as we sat in the rocking chair. Some-  
times he'd sing "real" songs -- "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot"  
was a favorite -- and sometimes he would make up his own.  
"See the Steamer Go 'Round the Bend" was a made-up song, in  
a way; it began as a parody on an English song (which was  
published in this country in 1882 and credited to Mr. T. H.  
Allen, who didn't really write it) which started:

See the ship go down the bay,  
Goodbye, my lover, goodbye;  
We shall not meet for many a day,  
Goodbye, my lover, goodbye.

But Dad didn't start it exactly that way. He would always use  
the first verse that I sing on this record, about "old Sam"  
being carried away to the penitentiary, then he'd make up a  
long story song, never doing it twice in the same way. Actually,  
I don't remember the exact words he sang, except for the first  
verse and the chorus, but I do remember that one of the Sam  
Songs told this story, and I've made up the words as well as  
I could to sound as if Dad had done them.

See the steamer go 'round the bend,  
Goodbye my lover, goodbye.  
They're taking old Sammy away to the pen,  
Goodbye my lover goodbye.  
And why are they taking old Sam to the pen?  
Goodbye, my lover, goodbye.  
He hit a policeman, and hit him again.  
Goodbye, my lover, goodbye.

CHORUS:  
Bye baby, bye-o. Bye baby, bye-o.  
Bye baby, bye-o, Goodbye, my lover, goodbye.

But Sam didn't want a steamboat ride,  
Goodbye . . . . ETC.  
And so he dove right over the side.

He couldn't swim, and he nearly sank,  
But he finally washed right up on the bank.

As he walked shivering down the road,  
A storm came up, and how it blowed!

The wind it blew, and the rain it poured,  
And then a man drove up in a Ford.

He said "Young man, you're cold and wet,  
And you'd like something to eat, I'll bet!"

And so they drove a little way  
Until they came to a small cafe.

They got out, and started into the store --  
But the man was so fat that he stuck in the door.

He said "I wish I could have some dinner,  
But I won't get out unless I get thinner."

But Sammy said "Don't give up hope;  
I'll get you out with a bar of soap!"

He soaped him well, and he soaped him good,  
And he pulled on the man as hard as he could.

The fat man finally came loose with a "pop!"  
And they fell on the floor with the man on top.

But Sam he soon got up from the floor;  
He ate ten hamburgers, and asked for more.

He ate till he couldn't eat any more,  
And the fat man drove him up to his door.

And Sammy said, as they carried him in,  
"I'll never hit a policeman again!"

The End