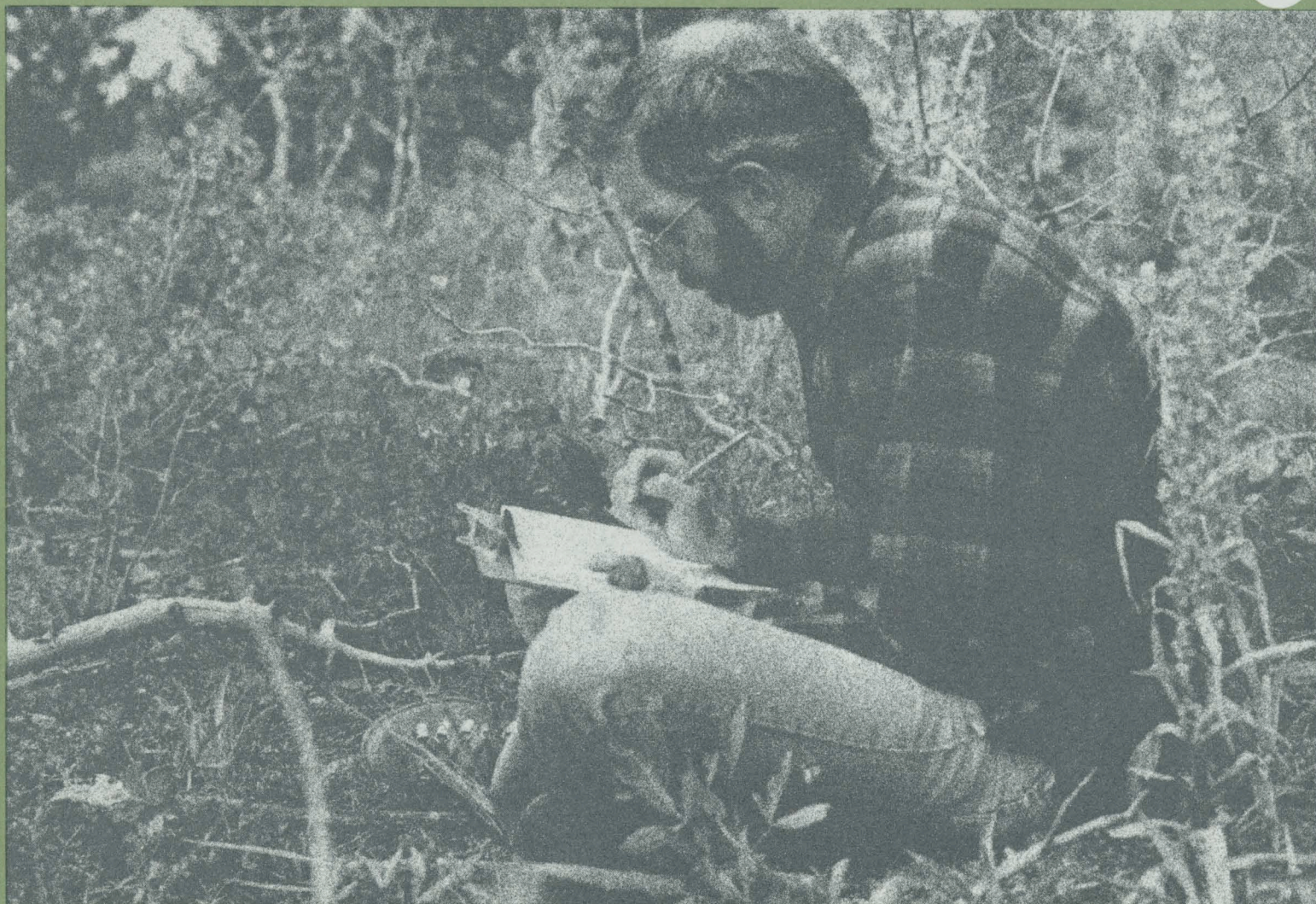


FOLKWAYS RECORD FTS 31051

**magic mountain**  
a collection of  
songs by  
**David Laing**



M  
1630.18  
L187  
M195  
1978

MUSIC LP

FOLKWAYS RECORD FTS 31051

**SIDE 1**

Band 1 Magic Mountain  
Band 2 Bound for Denver  
Band 3 I Wonder Why  
Band 4 My Flowers  
Band 5 PhD Blues  
Band 6 No Other Way

**SIDE 2**

Band 1 Silver Bell  
Band 2 Escape  
Band 3 Diamond Creek Reel (Instrumental)  
Band 4 Side Canyon (Instrumental)  
Band 5 Silver Brook  
Band 6 Alder River

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COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

COVER PHOTO: ON GOLD HILL, COLORADO,  
WITH YOUNG STARLING ON RIGHT KNEE.

PHOTO BY JENNIFER LAING

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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# magic mountain a collection of songs

## by david laing

### A Geosophical Note on the Songs and Their Composer

The chachem who got us kicked out of the Garden is the same one who said, "The proper study of mankind is man." I study the Garden in the hope that someday I can plant myself there again. When you can't tell an alder from an elder, and when you seal yourself off from the Garden with shoes, cars, and dogma, and when you pave it with asphalt, it's hardly surprising if you don't know it when you see it.

Man really belongs in East Africa, where he evolved. Elsewhere, he's a visitor, which is fine, as long as he understands what's going on around him, and can adapt successfully without impairing the substance and the long-term viability of his adopted context. There are far too many of us; a hundred times too many. It's our own fault, and eventually it must be corrected if mankind is to exist again in a state of dignity and harmony with the natural world.

I came into it all in Hanover, New Hampshire on the 18th of August, 1940. My father was Alexander Laing, a humanist/novelist, and my mother Dilys Bennett Laing, a humanist/poet. Both were great lovers, if not great students, of Nature, and believers in the need for human beings to be able to live with beauty, peace, and dignity, and not with ugliness, war and shame. My mother's mother, Eve Bennett, was brought up a good Christian in Wales. To this day, I believe she never knew she was a druidic priestess as well, and a magnificent one. She adored the Earth, and it loved her, as the flowers of her gardens revealed to thousands of passing admirers.

A fourth early teacher was the Dilowa Hutuktu, Living Buddha from Mongolia, who turned up one day unannounced on our Vermont back porch, and spent one indescribable week with me—I was twelve, as I remember—observing Nature and discussing it in perfectly intelligible Chinese (I later learned that language, and am still quite fluent in it). The Dilowa returned to Bryn Mawr and our mutual friend, Owen Lattimore, as inexplicably as he had appeared, and I never saw him again, but I certainly never forgot him.

At Exeter, Dartmouth (B.A.), the universities of Colorado and Arizona, and Harvard (M.A.), I learned how to ski, rockclimb, how to play guitar, banjo, fiddle and autoharp, how to identify rocks and flowers, and also a little on how to plug myself in to the mar-

velous House that Jack built. I always felt most at home, though, in the House of Green, about which I wrote the song with that name in May, 1969, as I drove from Betatakin, Arizona to Mammoth Mountain, California for a ski-rendezvous with Doug Pfeiffer.

Golden Stream was my first song. I wrote it in Boulder, Colorado in June, 1966 as the inspirational aftermath of a first trip into the desert canyon country of the Escalante River in southern Utah. I almost didn't come back from that trip because I had just freaked out of Harvard, and in the tranquil red rock wilderness of the Escalante I first recognized the Garden. I really wanted to stay there, but I eventually realized I wasn't ready, so I came back to civilization and wrote a song about it instead.

Golden Stream laments the building of Glen Canyon dam on the Colorado River. Mike Cohen heard the song from my old friend, Will Bassett, who sang it for Mike's traveling Trailside Country School group in the Grand Tetons. Mike then brought the group to Navajo National Monument to hear the song from the source, itself, which was then working as a park ranger. Sad to say, I had temporarily forgotten the words, for which Mike has never forgiven me. I suspect that the memory of this terrible incident is what prompted him to hound me unmercifully until I agreed to commit my assorted warblings to the indelible wax. Hence, this record.

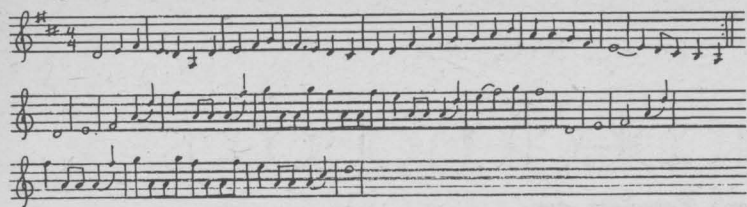
Later songs came from the stimuli of special places: Aspen, Colorado (Mother Earth), Betatakin Canyon, Arizona (Side Canyon, I Wonder Why), Grand Canyon (Diamond Creek Reel), Red River, New Mexico (Red River Breakdown), Boulder, Colorado (Alder River, My Flowers), Trailside, Vermont (Escape), South Woodstock, Vermont (Silver Bell, Bound for Denver), and Pepperell, Massachusetts (No Other Way, Silver Brook, Catwalk). Others I wrote while dreaming of places other than where I was: Tucson, Arizona (Beauty and the Beast, Science Will Find a Way), Catalina, Arizona (Catalina Reel), and still others while traveling cross-country (Magic Mountain, Roving Mind, PhD Blues).

Three songs: My Flowers, No Other Way, and Alder River, I wrote specially for Aquila, my forthcoming environmental science fiction adventure novel.

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Magic Mountain © David Laing 1977



Steep rock and water falling; birds in the timber calling;  
Mountain stillness and the magic of the rising Sun, in the morning;

I've got no time to spend on things that I can't depend on;  
Everything is always as I know it ought to be, in the mountains;

La, la, la, yo-o-ti, yo-lo-lo-u, ti-o-lo-i, ti-o-lo-i, ti,  
yo-lo-lo-o, di, di-di.  
La, la, la, yo-o-ti, yo-lo-lo-u, ti-o-lo-i, ti-o-lo-i, ti,  
yo-lo-lo-u, di.

Gold in the aspen burning; sign of the season turning;  
Soon the powder snow will deck the mountainsides again, in the winter;

That is the time I break away through the hills and take a  
Long, quiet trail through the stillness of the snow, singing,

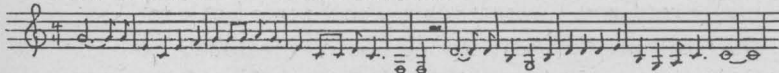
La, etc.

Then from a mountaintop on old, battered skis I drop on  
Down through the deep powder, winding through the glades, to the  
woodland;

Snow-covered firs are handsome; fill me with wonder and some  
Wild mountain madness for singing to the hills, and they answer,

La, etc.

Bound for Denver © David Laing 1977



New York Central: I'll be gone when the whistle blows  
on the westbound train;  
I'm bound for Denver, and I don't know if I'll be back again.

Well, I've been all round this country, and I've ridden  
the Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe;  
And everywhere I've rambled, I've wondered if I'll go there again someday.

Atchison, Topeka: don't you hear those big wheels rollin' on the  
Rio Grande?  
Well, it's C.B. and Q., and the Denver Zephyr sails to the western land!

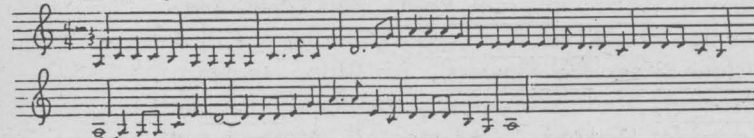
Don't you hear the whistle blowing, calling me: I must be going;  
got to ride that Silver Eagle on down the line;  
Where the crystal waters tumble, and the coyote sings beneath  
the lonesome pine.

Now, if you see me coming, clear a space for my bedroll on the  
kitchen floor;  
And we'll sit there in the firelight, living once again the times  
we've known before.

Well, I've been awhile a Rambler, and I guess I ought to try  
to settle down;  
So, I'm rolling back to Denver just to see if I can't stop  
this rambling round.

Repeat first verse.

I Wonder Why? © David Laing 1977



As I went out one fair May morn to hear the wild birds sing,  
A smoky haze hung in the air, and I didn't hear a thing,

And I wondered why (3) the birds had gone, and I wondered why.

A man goes fishing in the stream where his own pollution flows;  
Too thick to drink, too thin to plow, and the dead fish drift in rows,

And he wonders why (3) the fish have died, and he wonders why.

The Indian shepherd has a thousand sheep at his command,  
On a hundred acre farm, and erosion ruins his land,

And he wonders why (3) it happened to him, and he wonders why.

A farmer kills a wildcat to save his stock from harm;  
Then the things that wildcats live on move in and devour his farm,

And he wonders why (3) it happened to him, and he wonders why.

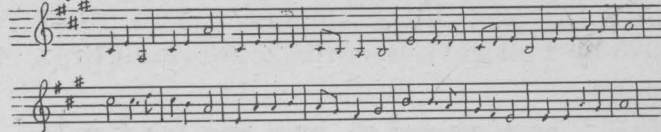
We need more people in this world, that's what the people say;  
But we're choking in our effluents, and thousands starve each day,

And they wonder why (3) it happens to them, and they wonder why.

Oh, the Pope, he is a gentle man, and I'm sure I wish him well;  
But he said no to birth control, and the whole world's going to hell,

And he wonders why (3) it came to this, and he wonders why.

My Flowers © David Laing 1977



Daisy-o, Daisy-o;  
In the morning, hazy-o;  
Your eye's the prettiest one,  
Waiting for the Sun.

I know my Daisy-o;  
I can find her where I go;  
Blue rays and golden eye  
Smile as I go by.

Lily-o, Lily-o;  
In the morning, chilly-o;  
Dawn brings the frozen land  
Gold for your white hand.

I know my Lily-o;  
I can find her where I go;  
High on a mountainside  
Upon the Great Divide.

Laurel-o, Laurel-o;  
Pentagons of coral-o;  
Cups for the gentle rain  
When it falls again.

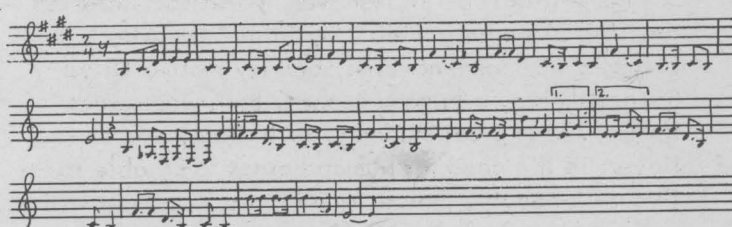
I know my Laurel-o;  
I can find her where I go;  
Lakes of the timberline  
Join her love with mine.

Thistle-o, Thistle-o;  
Set with spine and bristle-o;  
No lover's hand would dare  
Touch the dress you wear.

I know my Thistle-o;  
I can find her where I go;  
Trailside and meadowland,  
And by the water strand.

Repeat first verse.

PhD Blues © David Laing 1977



Well it's a right foot, left foot, steppin' on down;  
Along come Johnny in his dressing gown;  
Little black tassel on a mortarboard: he's all done!

Well, scubi-aba-duba, come along with me;  
Watch little Johnny get his PhD;  
He's worked so hard, that precious boy;  
Gonna be his momma's little pride and joy;  
'Cause he's been workin' on his Ph, workin' on his Ph,  
Workin' on his PhD!

Now, old Doc Jones is about half gone;  
Weepin' and a-wailin' and a-carryin' on;  
Gonna have to find another man, Friday who's gonna work;  
For a dollar a day,

While he's workin' on his Ph, workin' on his Ph,  
Workin' on his PhD!

It's John, oh, John, you done me wrong;  
You been workin' on the job so long;  
Got a special course just made for you, so hang around,  
Another year or two,

While you're workin' on your Ph, etc.  
Chorus

Now, it's oh, sweet momma, gonna weep and wail;  
Eighty-seven letters in the U.S. Mail;  
Come along, Johnny, got a job for you at ten grand, in Kalamazoo;

'Cause you've been workin' on your Ph, etc.

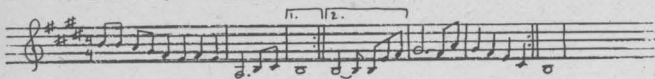
Well, you'll be workin' for a year or two  
As assistant keeper at the city zoo;  
Then you'll be appointed, if you do not fail, to shrink heads,  
At the county jail;

'Cause you've been workin' on your Ph; aintcha gladya got it?  
Workin' on your PhD!

Well, it's a poo-bah, foo-bah, bouncing bee;  
Open up a bumbershoot and jump on me;  
Home come a pumpernickel chicken pie, hot damn! Hot damn.

Chorus, ending with:  
'Cause he's been workin' on his Ph; slavin' for his Ph;  
Anything to get his PhD-D-D!

No Other Way © David Laing 1977



Watch the purple martins as they wheel in the Sun;  
Redwing blackbirds calling as the day is begun;

And you will know that there is no other Way.

Climb upon a mountain where the blueberries grow;  
Flaxen grasses waving where the south wind blows;

And you will know that there is no other Way.

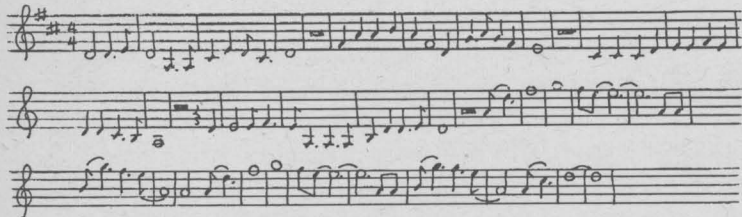
Willows bend before the wind and die when they're old;  
Squirrels gather acorns when the days turn cold;

And you will know that there is no other Way.

In a turning cycle, Now and Then are the same;  
And when you are safely home again, you'll lose your name;

And you will know that there is no other Way.

Silver Bell © David Laing 1977



Scared and alone on a lonesome desert plain;  
Orphaned by a stockman who lives upon the hill;  
I picked her up and gave her shelter from the rain;  
A wild little puppy, and I called her Silver Bell.

Lo-o dee, dee, dee; Yo-del-ay-ee-dee-dee-oh;  
Lo-o dee, dee, dee; Yo-del-ay-ee-dee-dee-oh, lo-o dee.

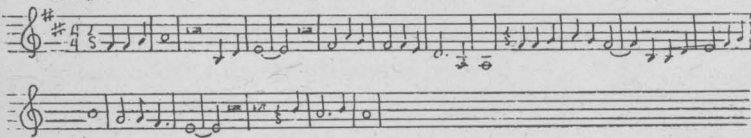
Come roll me over; scratch behind my ear;  
Run through the clover; watch me wag my tail;  
Take a little walk down the road in the sunshine;  
Carefree and gay was my pretty Silver Bell.

You know if you keep her she'll turn on you one day;  
The game warden told me, "I know the wolf too well;  
Better put her down, boy, or give her to a zoo,  
Before you are betrayed by your pretty Silver Bell."

Two years went by, and I knew she must go free,  
Far from the livestock of the ranch upon the hill;  
I took her to a wild place, and hoped that she would stay,  
And there I bid farewell to my pretty Silver Bell.

Then in my sorrow, riding out alone;  
Rode up the canyon to the ranch upon the hill;  
There I found a wolf lying cold by a fenceline;  
Homeward bound was my pretty Silver Bell.

Escape © David Laing 1977



I'm going away, come with me; all for the joy of your company;  
And leave this ship of fools in misery;

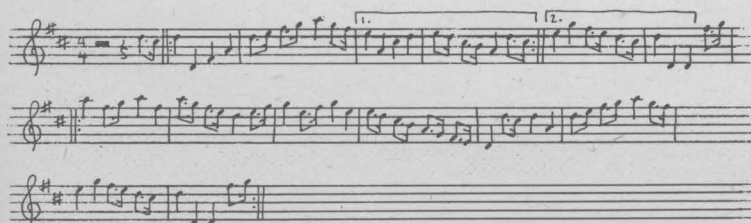
Look away, look away; la, la, la-la;

Do you hear the raven cry? All men are mad but you and I;  
And we must fly away or we will die;

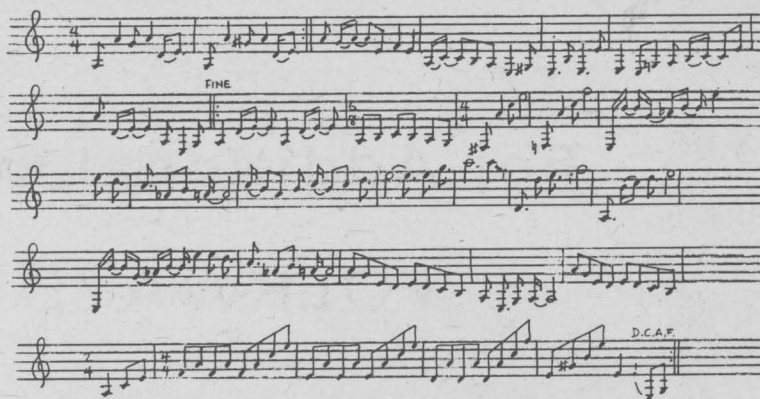
High above the eagle flies; nations are falling before his eyes;  
But he will lead us back to paradise;

And we will follow where he's flown; there I will stay with you alone;  
Where no disharmony was ever known;

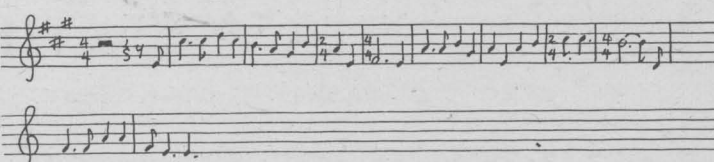
Diamond Creek Reel © David Laing 1977



Side Canyon © David Laing 1977



Silver Brook © David Laing 1977



There was a time when I could look into your eyes,  
And see the brook all silver, and upon your hair,  
The lilies dancing in the air.

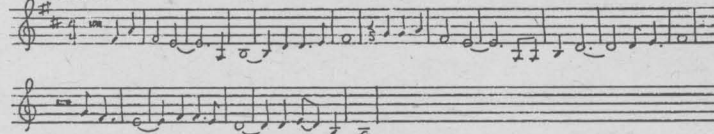
And silver brook and mountain sky and lilies fair,  
And you and I were all a single harmony,  
Upon an ancient melody.

But then there came a wistful dream that we might find  
A better theme apart from Nature's old design,  
Cloistered in a human shrine.

And so we took our theme away from mountain meadows  
Where we lay, and played it for ourselves alone;  
A grand and lofty monotone.

And now I wish in vain to look into your eyes,  
And see the brook all silver, and upon your hair,  
The lilies dancing in the air.

Alder River © David Laing 1977



Alder River runs down to Alderburn;  
And will you miss me till the day that I return;  
When I'm gone, so far away from Alderburn?

Frosty evenings, and the leaves have turned to gold;  
And I'll be leaving before the days turn cold,  
In the mountains, way up high, at Alderburn.

Foggy morning, you wear a coat of gray;  
And at daybreak, I'll ride the mists away,  
From the mountains, so far away from Alderburn.

And will the memory still linger when I'm gone,  
Of the pleasures we used to dwell upon,  
Will you remember the old trail to Alderburn?

In the winter, the snow lies on the plain;  
But when the clover grows green I'll come again,  
And will I find you there again by Alderburn?