Jean Ritchie sings

Children's Songs and Games from the Southern Mountains

Accompanying herself on dulcimer and guitar

Edited by Kenneth S. Goldstein
Childrens Songs and Games From The Southern Mountains

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Descriptive Notes are Inside Pocket

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Jean Ritchie SINGS CHILDREN'S SONGS AND GAMES

FROM THE SOUTHERN MOUNTAINS

A good sub-title for this record might be, "Schoolyard Songs and Games Recollected From My Childhood in Viper, Kentucky." And this does not mean there was anything academic in this music -- quite the contrary. These were the most intimate, personal, favorites of children which we children chose when we played alone with each other with no teacher to supervise and suggest. Our use of the schoolyard went beyond study hours, for the little two-room school house sat on one of the nicest pieces of bottomland in Viper, and the yard itself was a large playing field surrounded by tall old shade trees, and clumps of clover blossoms and daisies. Over the hill on the side of the field ran the little river, whose singing bands, a tangle with yellow-flowered stickweeds, branch willows and sycamore saplings afforded beautiful mysterious forests, castles and fortresses for our games at recess, twilight after school, long magic Saturdays.

In addition to schoolyard music, I have sung here a few of my father's fiddle ditties, one or two favorite play-party games (also learned on the schoolyard but at a more advanced age -- thirteen or fourteen), some family "foothing" songs and a well-remembered lullabye. I hope you like them.

- JUAN RITCHIE

Notes by KENNETH S. GOLDBEIN

SIDE 1, Band 1: JENNY, PUT THE KETTLE ON

When Jean was a little girl, this was a school-ground kissing game. One child stands in the center of a ring formed by the other children holding hands. The children march around the center child until the end of the first stanza, when he (or she) picks a partner, and then the child who originally was in the center joins the circle and the game starts over again.

Jenny, put your kettle on, a little and a big one,
Jenny, put your kettle on, we'll all take tea.
A slice of bread and butter'll be good enough for anyone...
Choose the one you love the best call them on the floor.

Oh dear Judy, how I love you,
Nothing on earth I love like I love you;
Heart you have and the hand I give you,
One sweet kiss and then I leave you.

For additional information see:

Ritchie, Jean, A GARLAND OF MOUNTAIN SONGS, New York, 1953.

MCDowell, F., FOLK DANCES OF TENNESSE, Smithville, Tenn., n.d.

CAMBADISE, C., EAST TENNESSEE & WESTERN VIRGINIA MOUNTAIN BALLADS, London, 1931

SIDE 1, Band 2: GO IN AND OUT THE WINDOW

This children's game is played in every school and playground across the country. A circle of children is formed, with hands joined and facing the center.

A. the singing begins, a child in the center of the circle waves in and out under the clasped hands. On the second stanza, the child chooses a partner of the opposite sex and faces him (or her). On the third stanza, the child in the center kneels before the chosen partner. On the fourth stanza, the measure of love is indicated by the partners holding hands, stretching out their arms and making a windmill motion with their arms going up and down. On the fifth stanza, the center child chooses his partner through the circle of raised arms until he catches and kisses her. The game begins again, with the chosen partner becoming the one person in the center and the original center child becoming part of the ring.

Go in and out the window,
Go in and out the window,
Go in and out the window,
Since we have gained this day.

Stand forth and face your lover, (3)
Since we have gained this day.

I kneel because I love you, (4)
Since we have gained this day.

I'll measure my love to you, (5)
Since we have gained this day.

I'll break my neck to kiss you, (6)
Since we have gained this day.

Chase, Richard, JUBILANT ONE AND OTHER SINGING FOLK DANCES, Boston, 1949.


Ford, Irma W., TRADITIONAL MUSIC OF AMERICA, New York, 1940.

RISE AND GIVE ME YOUR LILY-WHITE HAND,
SWING ME AROUND SO HANDY;
RISE AND GIVE ME YOUR LILY-WHITE HAND,
SWING ME LIKE SUGAR CANDY.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SEE:

SIDE I, Band 4: AMONG THE LITTLE WHITE DAISIES

This game-song is known widely throughout the South. A circle of children revolves around a child in the center of the circle. They then change direction and revolve the other way for two stanzas. For stanzas five, everyone repeats his head on his hands (to simulate being dead). In stanzas six, everyone cries (in sorrow for the widow). At the end of the last stanza, the center child counts out 24; the child on whom the number 24 falls, then takes his or her place in the center of the circle.

Jeanie is her first name,
First name, first name,
Jeanie is her first name,
Among the little white daisies.

Robinson is her second name,
Second name, second name,
Robinson is her second name,
Among the little white daisies.

Peter is his first name,
First name, first name,
Peter is his first name,
Among the little white daisies.

Ritchie is his second name,
Second name, second name,
Ritchie is his second name,
Among the little white daisies.

How poor Peter is dead and gone,
Dead and gone, dead and gone,
How poor Peter is dead and gone,
Among the little white daisies.

Left poor Jeanie a widow now,
Widow now, widow now,
Left poor Jeanie a widow now,
Among the little white daisies.

Twent4-four children at her feet,
At her feet, at her feet,
Twenty-four children at her feet,
Among the little white daisies.

(Spoken) one, two, three, four, five ..., twenty-four!

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SEE:
Revel, W. S., GAMES AND SONGS OF AFRICAN CHILDREN, New York, 1903.
Arnold, E., FOLK SONGS OF ALABAMA, University, Alabama, 1950.

SIDE I, Band 7: SALLY GOODIN

This song was once popular at play-parties, but Jean knows it purely as a fiddle tune. It is found as a favorite instrumental number throughout the South and square dance callers improvise calls to its melody.

LITTLE PIECE OF PIE
AND A LITTLE PIECE OF PUDDIN',
GIVE IT ALL AWAY
TO SEE SALLY GOODIN!

LITTLE PIECE OF PIE
AND A LITTLE PIECE OF PUDDIN',
GIVE IT ALL AWAY
TO SEE SALLY GOODIN!

SALLY IS SWEET
AND SALLY'S A DANDY,
ALL SHE EATS IS PEPPERMINT CANDY.

LITTLE PIECE OF PIE
AND A LITTLE PIECE OF PUDDIN',
GIVE IT ALL AWAY
TO SEE SALLY GOODIN!


SIDE I, Band 6: OLD BIELD EAGLE

Jean learned this play-party from her parents. The game is played with a large circle of children, with boys on the left side of their partners. The first couple joins hands and skips around inside the circle, back to their original place. The first couple then takes four steps towards the opposite couple and as they take their steps back, to place the opposite couple takes four steps towards them and back to place. The first couple swing left arms and then the boy in the first couple swings the girl in the second couple with his right arm, and then first couple swing each other with left again. They progress around the circle, the boy in the first couple swings each girl with right arm and his partner with his left. This action is repeated with each couple in the circle leading.

OLD BIELD EAGLE SWING AROUND,
DAYLIGHT IS GONE;
OLD BIELD EAGLE SWING AROUND,
DAYLIGHT IS GONE.

BOWARDS AND FORWARDS ACROSS THE FLOOR,
DAYLIGHT IS GONE,
BOWARDS AND FORWARDS ACROSS THE FLOOR,
DAYLIGHT IS GONE.

YOU SWING HERE AND I'LL SWING THERE,
DAYLIGHT IS GONE,
YOU SWING HERE AND I'LL SWING THERE,
DAYLIGHT IS GONE.

YOU G0 RIDE THE OLD GREY MAE,
I'LL GO RIDE THE ROAD;
IF YOU GET THERE BEFORE I DO,
LEAVE MY GIRL ALONE.

SAIL AROUND, MAGGIE, SAIL AROUND,
DAYLIGHT IS GONE;
OLD BIELD EAGLE SWING AROUND,
DAYLIGHT IS GONE.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SEE:

SIDE I, Band 6: TWO DUDES A-RIDING

This game song is known throughout the English-speaking world, and is played by children in many parts of the English-speaking world, and is played by children in many parts of the United States. Two boys march towards a line of children as the first stanza is sung, and then retire. As the second stanza is sung, the line of children march towards the "two dudes" and then retire. As the successive verses are sung, the line is repeated until after the seventh stanza. A girl is then asked to join the "two dudes." The game begins again with the "I don't ride." The game begins again with the "three dudes a-riding."

You come two dudes a-riding,
A-riding, a-riding,
Here come my dog, dudes a-riding,
Rinktum-a-dinctum-a-johmy-O.

WHAT ARE YOU RIDING HERE FOR,
HERE FOR, HERE FOR,
WHAT ARE YOU RIDING HERE FOR,
Rinktum-a-dinctum-a-johnny-O.

Riding here to get married,
Married, married,
Riding here to get married,
Rinktum-a-dinctum-a-johnny-O.

Do you want any one of us sir,
Us, sir, us, sir,
Do you want any one of us, sir,
Rinktum-a-dinctum-a-johnny-O.

You're all too dirty and greasy,
Greasy, greasy,
You're all too dirty and greasy,
Rinktum-a-dinctum-a-johnny-O.

We're just as good as you are,
You are, you are,
We're just as good as you are,
Rinktum-a-dinctum-a-johnny-O.

Won't have nobody but Mary,
Mary, Mary,
Won't have nobody but Mary,
Rinktum-a-dinctum-a-johnny-O.

(Spoken) WILL YOU COME?
Girl: NO!
Old dirty rag, she won't come out,
She won't come out, she won't come out,
Old dirty rag, she won't come out,
Rinktum-a-dinctum-a-johnny-O.
\(\text{(spoken): WILL YOU COME}\
\text{\hspace{1cm} (Girl): \text{YES!}}\)

Pretty little girl, she will come out,
She will come out, she will come out,
Pretty little girl, she will come out,
Rinkum-a-dintum-a-Johnny-O.

For additional information see:


\textit{SIDE 1, Band 0: KITTY ALONE}\

The "Kitty Alone" refrain is often found attached to some version of The Frog's Courtship. It is in itself, however, an independent song, and as such traces back over 400 years. Jean's Kentucky version, learned from her sister Kitty, is a version of the independent song, and is here sung as a lullabye.

\textit{SIDE 2, Band 1: LOVE SOMEBODY, YES I DO}\

Jean knows only two stanzas to this old fiddle tune. It is possible that they were once sung to a party-party game. The tune traces back to an old English country dance.

\textit{SIDE 2, Band 2: THE SWAPPING SONG}\

There are various southern mountain songs on the theme of successive exchanges at a loss. This song is made up of two completely distinct nursery rhymes, both tracing back to British sources over 150 years old. The first part of this song is known separately as The Foolish Boy and concerns the little boy who gets himself a wife in London, and the unhappy adventure that befall him. This song is extended with a series of unprofitable exchanges, frequently found by themselves and known as The Swapping Song. Jean has known this song since she was a small girl.

When I was a little boy I lived by myself,
All the bread and cheese I had, I laid it on the shelf.

side 2, band 4: \textit{THE OLD MAN IN THE WOOD}\

In its various New World versions, this song is usually known by the title The Old Man in the Wood or Father Grumble. There are several old British ballads on an identical theme, but the American versions seem to be descended from the Scottish original, John Grumble. It has been collected all over the United States, and is still sung traditionally in the Southern Mountains. The version Jean sings was learned from one of her sisters, who learned it at the Fine Mountain Settlement School.

There was an old man who lived in the woods.
As you can plainly see,
Who said he could do more work in one day,
Then his wife could do in three.
If this be true, the old woman said,
Why you must allow,
You must do my work for one day,
While I go drive the plow.

Now you must milk the tiny cow
For fear she would go dry,
And you must feed the little pigs
That are within the sty;
And you must watch the speckled hen
Let she stand lay astray,
And you must wind the reel of yarn
That I spun yesterday.

The old woman took the staff in her hand
And went to drive the plow,
The old man took the pail in his hand
And went to milk the cow;
But Tiny hitched, and Tiny flitted,
And Tiny cocked her nose,
And Tiny gave the old man such a kick
That the blood ran down to his toes.

Now, it's hey my good cow,
And ho my good cow,
And now my good cow stand still,
I'll be against my will.
But Tiny hitched, and Tiny flitted,
And Tiny cocked her nose,
And Tiny gave the old man such a kick
That the blood ran down to his toe.

Now when he had milked the tiny cow,
For fear she would go dry,
Why then he fed the little pigs
That are within the sty;
And then he watched the speckled hen
Let she stand lay astray,
But he forgot the reel of yarn
His wife spun yesterday.

He swore by all the leaves on the tree
And all the stars in the sky
That his wife could do more work in one day
Than he could do in five;
Now he by all the leaves on the tree
And all the stars in the sky
That his wife could do more work in one day
Than he could do in seven.

For additional information see:


SIDE 1, Band 8: MAMA HAD AN OLD GOOSE

This children's song appears to be a southern mountain version of the nursery rhyme, "Mama Had an Old Goose." In this version, the goose can be heard as a symbol of individuality (i.e., a rooster crows for the line "Werent she an old goose?"), repeated throughout the song, and is hardly meant to suggest strength. Jean learned this song from John and Ben Hall at the John C. Campbell Folk School at Brasstown, North Carolina.

Mama had an old goose,
Honey-bay-ho.
Went out to shoot her,
Honey-bay-ho.

Well, the gun it wouldn't shoot her.
Weren't she an old goose?

Well they threwed her in the hog-pen.
Weren't she an old goose?

And she broke the old sow's teeth out.
Weren't she an old goose?

Well, they put her in the table.

And the fork it wouldn't gouge her,
Honey-bay-ho.
And the knife it wouldn't cut her,
Honey-bay-ho.

Weren't she an old goose?

Honey-bay-ho.
Weren't she an old goose,
Honey-bay-ho.

For an interesting comparison with this song, see "FOLKWAYS Album FT 90, DELAWARE HUMOR, Song by Huddie Ledbetter, for a version of the Old Goose song.

SIDE 2, Band 8: WHO KILLED COCK ROBIN?

This children's nursery rhyme is at least 200 years old, first appearing in print in 1744 in Susanna Spofford's "Pretty Song Book." It has since appeared frequently in printed collections as well as in various collections of English and American folk songs.

Who killed Cock Robin?
It was I, said the sparrow,
With my little bow and arrow,
It was I, it was I, said the sparrow.

Who saw him die?
It was I, said the fly,
With my little beastly eye,
It was I, it was I, said the fly.

Who caught his blood?
It was I, said the fish,
With my little silver dish,
It was I, it was I, said the fish.

Who made his shroud?
It was I, said the beetle,
With my little sewing needle,
It was I, it was I, said the beetle.

Who made his coffin?
It was I, said the small,
With my little hammer and nail,
It was I, it was I, said the small.

Who dug his grave?
It was I, said the crows,
With my little spade and hoe,
It was I, it was I, said the crows.

Who lowered his head?
It was I, I said the crane,