FOLK SONGS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
SUNG BY PETE SEEGER

SKIP TO MY LOU
BLOW THE MAN DOWN
WORKING IN THE WEAVE ROOM
THE FARMER IS THE MAN
TREE CHOPPING SONG
THE WASHER LAD
HI LU LU
BAA, BAA, BLACK SHEEP
SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE A MOTHERLESS CHILD

JOSHUA FOUGHT THE BATTLE OF JERICHO
"OH WORRY CARE"
(An Ibo Legend by Alan Lomax, adapted by Pete Seeger)
ON TOP OF OLD SMOKY
JOHN HENRY
HAD'YENU
IT WOULD BE A WONDERFUL WORLD
SO LONG

DESCRIPTIVE notes are INSIDE POCKET

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FOLKWAYS RECORDS FC 7532
FOLK SONGS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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You know, there's a lot of good music in our country you never hear on the radio. You don't hear it on the juke boxes, or on television. Just ordinary old-fashioned songs which one person teaches to another. Old grandmothers teach it to their little grandchildren. And the grandchildren grow old, and teach it to their grandchildren. Let me show you what I mean. Maybe you all know this one. . . Hey, sing it with me.

Hey, hey, skip to my Lou,
Hey, hey, skip to my Lou,
Lost my partner, what'll I do. . .

Little Red Wagon, painted blue. . .

Flies in the sugar bowl, shoo, shoo, shoo. . .

Well, now you know, there's so many different kinds of songs that we could sing from now til next Tuesday breakfast and wouldn't half cover all the ballads, and love songs, and lullabies and marching songs, and hymns, and blues, and silly songs and sad songs people have made up.

And you know, every job of work there ever was had a song made up to go along with it. Every job of work a man or woman ever did... Everybody knows the sailor songs.

Blow the man down, bullies, blow the man down,
To me way, hey, blow the man down;
Blow the man down, bullies, blow him away,
Give me some time to blow the man down.

As I was a'walking down Paradise street,
A pretty young damsel I chanced for to meet...

Not only sailors of course, everybody knows there were cowboy songs too.

People working in factories have made up songs telling all their troubles.

Working in the weave room, fighting for my life,
Trying to make a living for my kiddies and my wife,
Some are needing clothing, some are needing shoes,
But I'm getting nothing but the weave room blues.
I got the blues, I got the blues,
I got them awful weave room blues.
I've got the blues (yodel), the weave (yodel) room blues.

There have been thousands of songs like that. Just sitting, working at a job, getting kind of bored, and you change around an old tune and put some new words to it... People out in the country:

When the farmer comes to town, with his wagon broken down,
The farmer is the man that feeds them all.
If you only look and see, I think you will agree,
The farmer is the man that feeds them all.
The farmer is the man, the farmer is the man,
Lives on credit till the fall,
With the interest rate so high, it's a wonder he don't die,
The middle man's the one that gets it all.

Oh the banker says he's broke, and the merchant's up in smoke,
But the farmer is the man that feeds them all,
It would put them to the test, if the farmer took a rest,
Then they'd know that it's the farmer feeds them all.

Oh the farmer is the man, the farmer is the man,
Lives on credit till the fall,
And his pants are wearing thin, his condition it's a sin,
He's forgot that he's the man that feeds them all.

Some of the work songs have a very definite rhythm.
Like this song, when a man is chopping. (Pete Seeger recorded this work-song at home in the woods around Beacon New York).

Hey, didn't old John (chop) cross the water (chop)
Water on his knees (chop) Didn't old John (chop) cross the water (chop)
On his knees (chop) Let's all (chop) bow down (chop) come on and face (chop) the rising sun (chop) didn't old John (chop) cross the water (chop) water on his knee. (chop)

Let us all (chop) sing together (chop) together on our knees (chop)
Let us all (chop) sing together (chop) on our knees (chop)
Let us all (chop) bow down (chop) Oh, Lord, and face the rising sun (chop)
Didn't old John (chop) cross the water (chop) on his knees (chop)
Didn't old John (chop) wade the water (chop) water on his knees (chop)
Didn't old John (chop) wade the water (chop) water on his knees (chop)

Let us all (chop) bow down (chop) Lie down and face (chop) the rising sun (chop) Didn't old John (chop) cross the water (chop) water on his knee (chop).

Let us all (chop) bow down (chop) Lie down and face (chop) the rising sun (chop) Didn't old John (chop) cross the water (chop) water on his knee (chop).
Oh, let me see, all the different kinds of jobs to work. Even little children have had songs. Did you ever hear this one?

It's early in the morning, we rise at five o'clock, And the little slaves come to the door and knock, knock, knock, Come ye little washer lad, come let's away, We're bound down to slavery for four pence a day. And he'll raise us our wages, for nine pence a day.

I'm afraid, in every country around the world there have been songs like that, where poor people have had to go and take care of the rich people's children. Right down in our own South you could hear songs like that:

Baa, baa, black sheep, where'd you leave your lamb, Way down yonder in the cornfield, And the buzzards and the butterflies, a buzzing all around, The poor little thing cries "mammy." My mama told me, before she went away, Take good care of the baby, But I went to play, and the baby went away, The poor little thing cried "mammy."

And the buzzards and the butterflies, A'buzzing all around, The poor little thing cried "mammy."

Do you know who made up this song? Oh, I don't know who, exactly, but it was made up by someone who was a slave, way back in slavery times. And she'd have to go up to the big house and take care of the master's children all day long. And her own children were down at the slave cabin with nobody to take care of them, except maybe an older brother or an older sister. You can imagine how their mother felt up there. Worrying, wondering how her little baby's getting along all day long. Who's keeping the flies off? Anybody rocking it to sleep?

Baa, baa black sheep, where'd you leave your lamb, Way down yonder in the cornfield, And the buzzards and the butterflies, were buzzing all around, The poor thing cried "mammy."

My mama told me, before she went away, To take good care of the baby, But I went to play, and the baby went away, And the poor little thing cried "mammy." And the buzzards and the butterflies, A'pecking on its eyes. The poor little thing cried "mammy."

Vigndig a Fremd Kind
(Translated)

I have to go to the washing rig, for four pence a day, And never a pleasant word from my gruffy looking boss, His conscience it may fail, and his heart it may give way, And he'll raise us our wages, for nine pence a day.

And there has even been songs for baby-sitters. I don't know all the words to this. But it goes something like this.

Vigndig a Fremd Kind
(Words & music re-printed from Sing Out magazine.)

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Baa, baa black sheep, where'd you leave your lamb, Way down yonder in the cornfield, And the buzzards and the butterflies, were buzzing all around, The poor thing cried "mammy."

My mama told me, before she went away, To take good care of the baby, But I went to play, and the baby went away, And the poor little thing cried "mammy." And the buzzards and the butterflies, A'pecking on its eyes. The poor little thing cried "mammy."
Did you ever wonder who it is makes up all these songs. The people who made up these songs were just ordinary folks like you and me, and millions of others like us. And they didn't make up a song all together. They'd take over an old tune and change it. There was some cowboy. He was singing a song called, "Bury Me Not on the Deep Blue Sea," an old English sailor's song. Of course, by the time he got through with it it was called, "Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie." Ah, you've probably done the same thing. You know the song that goes:

Pepsi Cola hits the spot, 12 full...

I was singing that to some kids in school, explaining that that came from an old English folk song.

Do you ken John Peel at the break of day,
Do you ken John Peel when he's far away.
With his hounds and his horns in the morning.

Oh, the kids say, "you're not singing it right.
This is the way we sing it."

SIDE I, Band 2:

Yep, you make them up all the time. Silly things that go on around you. If the song is a good enough one, why someone will pick it up from you, and he'll hand it on to someone else, and maybe they'll change verses a little bit, change the tune a little bit, and hundreds of different people might have had a hand in putting it together. You know, you put all these songs together, they're better than a whole shelf of history books. They'll tell you everything that ever went on. The good times, and the bad times, and all the work people had to do to make this a good country to live in. And the fights and the troubles they had. Think of the days when there was slavery, and a child could be taken and sold, just like a pound of bacon, sold to some stranger he never saw before. Never see its mother again.

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

Sometimes I feel like a feather in the air...

Sometimes I feel like I'm almost gone...

Well, you know how we got rid of slavery, don't you. It wasn't one person, it wasn't two. Took a whole lot of people, all working together, just like that old song, you know. Joshua, telling how if you wanted to break down those walls of Jericho, everybody has to blow the trumpet the exact same time. You know it. Sing it along with me:

Joshua came to Jericho, took his horn and gave a blow,
Said that city had to go, that's the end of Jericho.

Joshua fought the battle of Jericho, Jericho, Jericho,
Joshua fought the battle of Jericho, and the walls came a'tumbling down.
That morning, Joshua fought, etc.
Now up to those walls of Jericho, he marched with a spear in hand,
Go blow those ram horns Joshua cried, for the battle is in my hands.
(That morning) Joshua fought, etc.

Then the lamb, ram, sheep horns began to blow, the trumpets began to sound,
Old Joshua commanded the children to shout, and the walls come a'tumbling down.

Now there's no man like Joshua, no man like Saul,
No man like Joshua, at the battle of Jericho.

(CHORUS)

SIDE II, Band 1:

Oh Worry Care, an Ibo legend by Alan Lomax
adapted by Pete Seeger.

Oh, Worry Care, oh, Worry Care,
Countryman they're gonna kill me, to kill me,
The Ibo land they're gonna show me the gal they call Worrycare.
Show me the gal they call Worrycare, show me
the gal they call Worrycare.

You know where that song came from. Long, long, long time ago, there was a king. And he had a beautiful daughter. But this daughter gave him so much trouble. She wouldn't mind. And she kept getting into scrapes, and she...she declared she wouldn't marry anybody. And the king was just in a terrible fix. He advertised all around the kingdom. He wanted to get a suitor for her. He wanted to get a husband for her. And he had a contest. He advertised "anybody who can guess the name of my daughter, my own private name for my daughter, can have her hand in marriage." And his private name for his daughter was Worrycare because she caused him so much worry, so much care. Well, the rich and the fine people came from all around the country. The princes, and the dukes. And they'd go up and try and guess the name. And one would say "Estelle," the other'd say, "Mary," and the other'd say, "Topsy." And the other'd say, "Goldilocks." Nope. They wouldn't guess right, and off would go their heads. Just like that, because they didn't guess right. Now it just so happened that in this big city was a young man who often admired the princess, when she rode down the street in her fine carriage. He thought she was the most beautiful thing in the entire world he'd ever seen. He certainly wanted to marry her. But he was scared to go up and try, and just guess, and get his head chopped off like everybody else. So he decided he would be a little clever. He said, "after all, you know. You don't have to go to school to be clever always, and I've a little native wit that comes from a long time ago. My grand-
mother she came from Ibo land, and she said, if you want to find something out you go very quietly. You don't let anybody know you are there. And you listen and keep your ears open. So my grandmother from Ibo land, I'm going to take her advice. He snuck down to the side of the ocean, where the princess used to go in swimming. And he hid there in the bushes, and there she was in swimming. None of the servants around knew that he was there, except her little dog. The little dog, I guess, could sniff the air and tell some stranger was there. And the dog went to the bush and started barking. And he didn't know what would happen. If they discovered him they'd chop his head off anyway. The dog was barking at him, and the princess came and said, "Go away from that bush. Go away, from that bush. What are you making such a fuss about. If my name wasn't 'Worrycare' I'd give you a good spanking." "Ah, hah," he says, "now I know. Or do I?" he says. "Maybe I didn't hear right." He went back to his home and he thought I know what I'll do. And he got all his friends together. And he said, "Let's have a parade. Downtown. And I'll teach you my new song." And they made a big Conga line like a snake, and he had a big drum at the head of it. He made up a song. And he taught them the song. (Oh, Worrycare / etc.) You see, he says "the countryman they gonna kill me, they kill me, right here in my own country. But the Ibo land, where my grandmother came from, ah, Ibo land is gonna show me how to tell the real name of the princess. (Sings)

Well, you know the king leaned out of his window, and he heard this whole long line of people snaking down the main street of town with the drummer at the head. And they were all singing so loud, he said, "Who gave them the name of my daughter. He has guessed it. And he called them all into the palace. And there were all the ragamuffins, and all the gay people dressed up in many colors, and the princess came in, and she looked around, and she was scared. She'd never seen so many strange people, and all their ragged clothes. But the king says, "You guess the name of my daughter, and I'll keep the bargain. Here she is. They all sang:

(They'll hug you and kiss you) They'll hug you and kiss you,
(And tell you more lies) And tell you more lies.
(Than crossties on a railroad) Than crossties on a railroad,
(Or stars in the skies) Or stars in the skies.
(And listen to me) And listen to me.
(To the leaves they will wither) For the leaves they will wither,
(And never know why) And never know why.

SIDE II, Band 3: Good Night Irene

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

Last Saturday night I got married, Me and my wife settled down.
Now me and my wife are parted, I'm gonna take another stroll downtown.
You caused me to weep, you caused me to morn.
You caused me to leave my home.
But the very last words I heard her say, Was please sing me one more song.

SIDE II, Band 4: John Henry

And they used to have songs about famous people that did great things. I'm not just talking about George Washington, or Abraham Lincoln, but lets sing a song about a very famous man who did a very great thing:

John Henry was about two days old, sitting on his poppa's knee,
He picks up a hammer and a little piece of steel,
Cried this hammer's gonna be the death of me,
Lord, Lord,
This hammer's gonna be the death of me.

Now the captain he said to John Henry, I'm gonna bring me a steam drill 'round,
I'm going to bring the steam drill out on the job,
I'm gonna whup that steel on down, down, down,
I'm gonna whup that steel on down.
John Henry said to his captain, bring me a thirty pound hammer around,
Yeah, a thirty pound hammer with a five foot handle,
And I'll beat your steel drill down, down, down,
Beat your steam drill down.
Now John Henry said to his shaker, said shaker you better pray,
For if I miss that six-foot piece of steel,
Tomorrow be your burying day, Lord, Lord,
Tomorrow be your burying day.
Now the man that invented the steam drill, he thought he was mighty fine,
But John Henry drove fifteen feet,
And the steam drill only made nine, Lord, Lord,
Steam drill only made nine.

John Henry hammered in the mountain,
His hammer was striking fire,
He worked so hard he broke his poor heart,
And he lay down his hammer and he died, Lord, Lord,
He lay down his hammer and he died.

John Henry had a little woman, and her name was Polly Ann,
John Henry took sick and he went to his bed,
And Polly Ann drove steel like a man, Lord, Lord,
And Polly Ann drove steel like a man.

Now, John Henry had a little baby, you could hold him in the palm of your hand,
And the last words I heard that poor boy say,
My daddy was a steel driving man, Lord, Lord,
My daddy was a steel driving man.

So every Monday morning, when the bluebirds began to sing,
You can hear John Henry about a mile or more,
You can hear John Henry's hammer ring, Lord, Lord,
You can hear John Henry's hammer ring.

SIDE II, Band 5: Dayenu

Well, not only did working people help to make this world what it is, but many different kinds of working people made it. Let's sing a song in another language but English. How many of you know?

(Words & music re-printed from Sing Out magazine.)

So long, it's been good to know you,
So long, it's been good to know you,
So long, it's been good to know you,
This dusty old dust is a getting my home,
And I got to be drifting along.

If there were no poor, and the rich content,
If strangers were welcome wherever they went,
If each of us knew what true brotherhood meant,
It could be a wonderful world, it could be a wonderful world.

Words & music by Hy Zaret and Lou Singer

SIDE II, Band 7: So long

by Woody Guthrie

If we consider each other, a neighbor, a friend or a brother,
It could be a wonderful, wonderful world,
It could be a wonderful world, it could be a wonderful world.

If each little kid could have fresh milk each day,
If each working man had enough time to play
If each homeless could have a good place to stay,
It could be... etc.