

# Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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## Conversation With a Mule

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Old Mule, you're the son of a donkey, and I'm in the image of God,  
Yet here we work, hitched together, a-toilin' and tillin' sod.  
I wonder if you work for me, or I work for you, old Mule--  
At times I think it's a partnership between a mule and a doggone fool.

When plowing, we go the same distance, but I work harder than you.  
You skim the ground on four good legs, while I hobble along on two.  
So, Mule, mathematic'ly speaking, your four legs 'gainst my two,  
I do just twice the work per leg; I do twice as much as you.

Soon we'll be making the corn crop, and that crop will be split three  
ways:

A third for you, a third for me, and a third for the landlord's pay.  
You take your third and eat it. You're getting the best, and how;  
I split my third between a wife and eight kids, a banker, six hens, and  
a cow!

And right here, Mule, I might mention, that you only plow the ground.  
I shuck the corn and husk it, while you're hee-hawin' around.  
All fall and part of the winter, old Mule, you know it's true,  
I break my back with a cotton-sack, tryin' to pay off the mortgage on  
you.

Now, the only time I'm your better is when elections come.  
A man can vote, and a mule can not, but that don't worry you none.  
Because you're a wise old donkey; you know what to worry about.  
You knew politics wouldn't help you none, and I'm just findin' it out.

So, Mule, confidentially speaking, would you change places with me?  
Would you take up all my worries, and still contented be?  
Would you change places, I'm asking; of course you know we couldn't,  
But would you if you could--now tell the truth--you're doggone right you  
wouldn't!

These words came from an old 78 I've had since I was a kid. It's by  
Arthur "Guitar Boogie" Smith, and is attributed to "Miller" on the label.  
Joe Stead (in Shelley Posen's SingOut! column), adds the first name "Bob" to  
the writer, and says the song was written in 1935. Since th  
spoken, not sung, there is of course no melody.

