

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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The Wild Lumberjack

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One day I was walking out on the mountain,
A wood robin was singing, I happened to spy
A handsome young lumberjack on the banks of the river,
All dressed in white linen, and laid out to die.

CHORUS:

So beat your drum lowly, and play your fife slowly,
And play the Dead March as you carry me along.
Oh, take me to the mountain, and lay the sod o'er me,
For I'm a wild lumberjack, and I know I've done wrong.

Once out in the forest I used to go slashing;
Once in the big timbers I used to be gay.
I first took to drinking, and then to card playing,
Was shot in the breast, and I'm dying today.

Go some one, and write to my Grey-headed mother,
And also to my brothers and sisters so dear;
But there is another far dearer than mother,
Who'd bitterly weep if she knew I was here.

(CHORUS)

Go, some one, and bring me a cup of cold water,
A cup of spring water, the poor woodsie said;
But ere it had reached him his spirit had vanished,
Gone to the Giver, the poor fellow was dead.

(Sung by Kenneth S. Goldstein)

Still another obvious parody of "The Cowboy's Lament", in which the western setting has been replaced by the 'big timbers' of the northern Lumbering country.

The text sung here (to a conventional 'Cowboy's Lament' tune) may be found in Henry W. Shoemaker's "Mountain Minstrelsy of Pennsylvania" (Philadelphia, 1931). Colonel Shoemaker's headnote to the song reads: "Version of the old song, "The Wild Cowboy," as sung in Potter County logging camps, with many variations. Reported by John C. French." To date, no other lumberjack version has been reported from tradition.

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