

## Rye Whiskey

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I'll eat when I'm hungry,  
I'll drink when I'm dry,  
If the hard times don't kill me,  
I'll lay down and die.

Rye whisky, rye whisky,  
Rye whisky, I cry,  
If you don't give me rye whisky,  
I surely will die.

I'll tune up my fiddle,  
And I 'll rosin my bow,  
I'll make myself welcome,  
Wherever I go.

Beefsteak when I'm hungry,  
Red liquor when I'm dry,  
Greenbacks when I'm hard up,  
And religion when I die.

They say I drink whisky,  
My money's my own;  
All them that don't like me,  
Can leave me alone.

Sometimes I drink whisky,  
Sometimes I drink rum,  
Sometimes I drink brandy,  
At other times none.

But if I get boozy,  
My whisky's my own,  
And them that don't like me,  
Can leave me alone.

Jack o' diamonds, jack o' diamonds,  
I know you of old,  
You've robbed my poor pockets  
Of silver and gold.

Oh, whisky, you villain,

You've been my downfall,  
You've kicked me, you've cuffed me,  
But I love you for all.

If the ocean was whisky,  
And I was a duck,  
I'd dive to the bottom  
To get one sweet suck.

But the ocean ain't whisky  
And I ain't a duck,  
So we'll round up the cattle  
And then we'll get drunk.

My foot's in my stirrup,  
My bridle's in my hand,  
I'm leaving sweet Lillie,  
The fairest in the land.  
Her parents don't like me,  
They say I'm too poor;  
They say I'm unworthy  
To enter her door.

Sweet milk when I'm hungry,  
Rye whisky when I'm dry,  
If a tree don't fall on me,  
I'll live till I die.

I'll buy my own whisky,  
I'll make my own stew,  
If I get drunk, madam,  
It's nothing to you.

I'll drink my own whisky,  
I'll drink my own wine,  
Some ten thousand bottles  
I've killed in my time.

I've no wife to quarrel  
No babies to bawl;  
The best way of living  
Is no wife at all.

Way up on Clinch Mountain  
I wander alone,  
I'm as drunk as the devil,  
Oh, let me alone.

You may boast of your knowledge

An' brag of your sense,  
'Twill all be forgotten  
A hundred years hence.

(Negro Variant)

In my little log cabin,  
Ever since I been born,  
Dere ain't been no nothin'  
'Cept dat hard salt, parched corn.

But I know whar's a henhouse,  
De turkey he charve;  
An, if ol' Massa don' kill me  
I cain't never starve.

(Variant chorus)

Rye whisky, rye whisky,  
You're no friend to me;  
You killed my poor daddy,  
Goddamn you, try me.

Additional verses

O Mollie, O Mollie, it's for your sake alone  
That I'd leave my old parents, my house, and my home.

I'll eat when I'm hungry, I'll drink when I'm dry  
And when I get thirsty I'll lay down and cry

O baby, O baby, I've told you before,  
Do make me a pallet, I'll lay on the floor.

I will build me a castle on yonder mountain high  
Where my true love can see me when she comes ridin' by.

Where my true love can see me and help me to mourn.  
I'm a rabble soldier and Dixie's my home.

I'll get up in my saddle, my quirt in my hand,  
And I'll think of you, Mollie, when in some distant land.

I'll think of you, Mollie. You caused me to roam.  
I'm a rabble soldier and Dixie's my home.

But the ocean ain't whiskey, and I ain't no duck,  
So I'll play jack o' diamonds and try to change my luck.

I have rambled and gambled all my money away  
But it's with the rabble army, O Mollie, I must stay

It is with the rabble army, O Mollie, I must roam.  
I'm a rabble soldier and Dixie's my home.

The Union men and Yankees have forced me from my home.  
I am a rebel soldier and far from my home.

I'll eat when I'm hungry, I'll drink when I'm dry.  
If those Yankees don't kill me, I'll fight till I die.

From American Ballads and Folk Songs, Lomax  
Note: One of the more exhaustive texts.  
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