

# Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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## The Bad Girl's Lament

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As I walked down to St. James' Hospital,  
St. James Hospital early one day,  
I spied my only fairest daughter  
Wrapped up in white linen as cold as the clay.

#### CHORUS:

So beat your drums and play the fife lowly,  
And play the dead march as you carry me along;  
Take me to the churchyard and lay the sod over me,  
I am a young maid and I know I've done wrong.

Once in the street I used to look handsome;  
Once In the street I used to dress gay;  
First to the ale house, then to the dance hall  
Then to the poor house and now to my grave.

#### (CHORUS)

Send for the preacher to pray o'er my body,  
Send for the doctor to heal up my wounds,  
Send for the young man I first fell in love with,  
That I might see him before I pass on.

#### (CHORUS)

Let six pretty maidens with a bunch of red roses,  
Six pretty maidens to sing me a song,  
Six pretty maidens with a bunch of red roses  
To lay on my coffin as they carry me along.

#### (CHORUS)

Sung by Wade Hemsworth

The transformation from a ballad of a misguided male 'rake' (soldier or sailor) to that of a young girl 'gone wrong' is not as simple as one might suspect; more than a mere change of sex has been made.

In each of the three ballads above the burial ceremony requested by the young man is a totally military one, and no request is made for death-bed visitors.

In each of the four 'bad girl' versions given here, the death march is more conventional, though still

retaining military overtones, and death bed communicants (preacher, doctor, lover, and parents) are asked for.

This variant of The Bad Girl's Lament, sung by Wade Hemsworth as learned by him in the Canadian North Woods (Northern Ontario and Quebec), is closely related to early texts reported in the Canadian Maritimes and Maine.

This recording may also be heard as part of an album of Folk Songs of the Canadian North Woods (Folkways FW 6b21), sung by Wade Hemsworth accompanying himself on guitar.

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