

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Betsy Bell

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O my name is Betsy Bell, in the Gallowgate I dwell.
Nae doot you'll wonder whit I'm daein' here.
Well, I'm lookin' for a man, be he auld or be he young,
And onything in breeks will dae wi' me.

Well, 'twas on last Friday nicht I met auld Sandy Wricht,
And he asked me for tae be his lovin' bride.
But I couldnae let him see I was desperate as could be,
So I tellt him for tae come awa' inside.

Well, he jumpit at the chance, aye, it fairly made me dance,
And I gied tae him my answer there and then,
But when I'd bought my wedding frock, he said,
"Lord, it's a' a joke!"
O, I wonder fit's a dae wi' a' the men.

So if there's onybody here wha wad like a nice wee dear,
Although I'm only three score and ten,
Be he young or be he auld, curly-heided, fringed, or bald,
O, I wonder fit's a dae wi' a' the men.

For of lads I've had my share; I've had a score or mair,
But why they threw me up I dinna ken.
For I'm neither prood nor shy, that the lads should pass me by.
O, I wonder fit's a dae wi' a' the men.

As recorded by Ray Fisher on "Willie's Lady." From the singing of Jeannie Robertson. Belle, Shiela, and Cathie Stewart sing a different version on their recording "The Stewarts of Blair." This version uses the first four verses given here (with differences in dialect), but uses the final verse as a chorus (sung after every other verses) and adds two more double verses, in the first of which Bessie complains at another woman's success in finding husbands while the second is devoted to her own thrift and financial security.

I refuse to speculate on why this song is sung primarily by female singers. RW

glossary:

a': all

auld: old

awa': away
breeks: breeches, i.e. trousers
couldnae: could not
dae, daein': do, doing
dinna: do not
doot: doubt
fit's a dae: what's to do, i.e. "what's the matter"
gied: gave
ken: know
mair: more
nae: no
nicht: night
onybody: anybody
onything: anything
tae: to
wad: would
wha: who
whit: what
wi': with

RW