

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Johnny and Betsy

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There was an old woman who lived on the strand,
And Johnny was her only son,
And servant Betsy, beauty fair,
Drew his heart into a snare.

One evening Johnny took his time
To tell to her what was in his mind:
"O Betsy, O Betsy, I love you well!
I love you better than tongue can tell!
O Betsy, O Betsy, I love you dear!"

His mother chanced these words to hear.
Then she resolved within her mind
To stop these two of their designs.
Early next morning when she arose
She says to Betsy, "Put on your clothes.
Go dress yourself," says she,
"And wait on me two days or three."

Then o'er the country they went,
But Betsy knew not her intent.
There was a ship lying in the down,
And to Verginny it was bound,
Where she sold Betsy across the main,
And returned safe home to her son again.

"You're welcome home, dear mother," he says,
"But where is Betsy behind you stayed?"
"O son, O son, your love's in vain,
For we sold Betsy 'cross the main.
My son, my son," says she,
"You're bringing scandal on you and me.
I would rather see your corpse lie dead
Than to marry Betsy, a servant maid."

"Then your desire you soon shall have,
If you'd rather see ny corpse lie dead
Then to marry Betsy, A servant maid!"
Then he took sick, O very bad,
No mirth nor music could make him glad.
They sent for doctors far and near,
But none of them could Johnny cheer;
And every doctor tried their skill

Till at last they did poor Johnny kill.

And when she saw her son lie dead,
She wrang her hands and tore her head,
Saying, "If life I once could bring again,
I'd send for Betsy across the main!
If life I once could bring again,
I'd send for Betsy across the main!

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