

# Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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## Pick Poor Robin Clean

Pick Poor Robin Clean

CHO: You better pick poor robin clean  
Pick poor robin clean  
I picked his head, I picked his feet  
( Would have) I picked his body, but it wasn't fit to eat  
You'd better pick poor robin clean  
Pick poor robin clean  
But I'll be satisfied having your family

Get off my money and don't get funny  
'Cos I'm a nigger, don't cut no figure  
Gamblin' for Sadie, she is my lady  
I'm a hustlin' coon that's just what I am

Well didn't that jaybird laugh  
When he picked poor robin clean  
Picked poor robin clean, poor robin clean  
Didn't that jaybird laugh  
When he picked poor robin clean  
Well I'll be satisfied having your family

Well if you have that girl of mine  
Gonna have your ma, your sister too (two)  
Your auntie three  
If your great-grandmammy do the shivaree (?)  
I'm gonna have 'em all  
I'll be satisfied having the family

Source: Luke Jordan 'Pick Poor Robin Clean' Vi 20957.  
Recorded 18 August 1927.  
Reissued on Various Artists 'Before the Blues Vol 3' Yazoo CD 2017.

There is an excellent rendition by Dave Ray on the Koerner, Ray and Glover reunion album 'One Foot in the Groove' Tim/Kerr TK96CD137.  
Dave gets around Jordan's second verse by singing:

Get off my money, don't get funny  
'Cos I'm a white guy, knows a big lie  
Gamblin' for Sadie, she is my lady  
I'm a hustlin' fool, that's just what I am

He also has 'neighbours' instead of 'jaybird'. 'Didn't the neighbours laugh when they picked poor robin clean'.

As well as on the 'Minstrel to Mojo' set mentioned by GG, Luke Jordan's original recording has been reissued on Various Artists 'Before the Blues Vol 3' Yazoo 2017. In his notes to that album, Don Kent writes:

Derived from a breakdown and given a lazy, raggy cast, this song was probably very popular in the medicine show and carnival circuit in the early 1900s, when it was undoubtedly current. Jordan plays it as a true breakdown, changing chords with every measure, and takes a stab at flamenco-styled guitar in the last instrumental passages. Luke Jordan was born in Bluefield, West Virginia in 1892, an area that experienced a rapid growth in black population at the turn of the century with the expansion of its coalfields. Jordan evidently learned this song fairly early, as it was his signature piece when he settled in Lynchburg in 1916. Most black Lynch that Jordan did not play any blues when he arrived there.

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