

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Pretty Saro 2

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When first to this country a stranger I came,
I placed my affection on a handsome young dame.
I looked all around me, and I was alone
And a poor stranger and a long way from home.

CHO: Oh Saro, pretty Saro, I love you, I do

I love you, pretty Saro, wherever I go;

No tongue can express it, no poet can tell

How truly I love you, oh I love you so well.

Down in some lonely valley, in some lonesome place,
Where the small birds are singing and the notes to increase
The thoughts of pretty Saro, so neat and complete,
I want no better pastime than to be with my sweet.

Oh I wish I was a poet and could write some fine hand;
I would write my love a letter that she might understand
And send it by the waters where the island overflows,
And think of pretty Saro wherever I go.

My love she don't love me, as I understand,
She wants some freeholder, and I have no land.
But I can maintain her with the silver and gold
And all the pretty fine things that my love's house can hold.

Oh Saro, pretty Saro, I must let you know
How truly I love you - I never can, though;
No tongue can express it, no poet can tell
How truly I love you, I love you so well.

It's not the long journey I'm dreading to go
Nor leaving of this country for the debts that I owe;
There is but one thing that troubles my mind,
That's a-leaving pretty Saro, my true love, behind.

Farewell my dear father, likewise my mother too,
I'm a-going to ramble this country all through.
And when I get tired, I'll sit down and weep
And think of pretty Saro wherever she be.

Oh I wish I was a little dove, had wings and could fly,
Straight to my love's bosom this night I'd draw nigh
And in her little small arms all night I would lay
And think of pretty Saro till the dawning of day.

I love you, pretty Saro, I love you, I know.
I love you, pretty Saro, wherever I go.
On the banks of the ocean and the mountain's sad brow
I love you then dearly, and I love you still now.

Note that verses 5 and 9 borrow heavily from the chorus.
The Frank C Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore (Duke Univ Press 1952)
describes Pretty Saro (aka Pretty Sarah)"a favorite song in the South, and carri
ed
thence to the Midwest. It is reported as as a traditional song from Virginia,Ke
ntucky,
North Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, the Ozarks, Indiana, and Iowa...The author
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if it had one - has not been discovered." Two text versions and six tune variati
ons
are included in the FCB Collection. The first is rather much longer than most.

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