

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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The Sandgate Lass on the Ropery Banks

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On the Ropery Banks Jinny was sittin--
She had on a bed-goon just new,
And blythely the lassie was knittin
Wi' yarn of a bonny sky-blue:
The strings of her cap they were hingin,
Se lang on her shoulders se fine,
And hearty aw heard this lass singin--
Maw bonny keel lad shall be mine.

[Chorus, in between verses and at end:]

O wad the keel come doon the river,
That aw my dear laddie could see;
He whistles, he dances se cliver,
Maw bonny keel laddie for me.

Last neet in amang these green dockins
He fed me wi' gingerbreed spice--
Aw promised to knit him these stockins,
He cuddled and kiss'd me se nice;
He ca'd me his jew'l and his hinny;
He ca'd me his pet and his bride,
And he swore that aw should be his Jinny,
To lie at neets doon bi his side.

That mornin forget aw will niver,
When first aw saw him on the Kee,
The "Keel Row" he whissel'd se cliver,
He wun my affections frae me;
His drawers on his doup luik'd se canny,
His keel hat was cock'd on his heed,
And if aw'd not gettin my Jimmy,
Faith, by this time aw wad be deed.

The first time aw spoke to maw Jimmy--
Now mind ye it isn't a lee--
My mother had gi'en me a penny,
To bring her a penn'orth o' tea;
When a lad i' the street cried oot "Bessie!"
Says I, "Hinny, that's not my nyem;"
"Becrike, niver mind," he said, "lassie,
To-neet aw will see ye syef hyem."

Since then aw hae been his true lover,
Aw've lov'd him as dear as my life,
And in spite o' byeth fethor and mother,
Aw'll suen be maw keel-laddie's wife!
How happy we'll be then together,
When he brings hyem his wages ti me,
Wiv his bonny bit bairn cryin "Fethur,"
And another one laid o' my knee.

Tune called "The Skipper's Wedding" (in the authors works, 1872); but Stokoe & Reay (Songs & Ballads of Northern England) call it "Fy let us a' to the Bridal", a Scottish tune at least 100 years older than Nunn, with its own set of words. It's a lively melody in 9/8, ending on the supertonic.

MS

MS(Robert Nunn)

, blind

fiddler/songster of Newcastle (died 1853, aged 45).

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