

# Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

[www.traditionalmusic.co.uk](http://www.traditionalmusic.co.uk)

## The Wren She Lies in Care's Bed

The Wren She Lies in Care's Bed

1.

The Wren scho lyes in care's bed,  
In care's bed, in care's bed;  
The Wren scho lyes in care's bed,  
In meikle dule and pyne---O.  
Quhen in came Robin Red-breast,  
Red-breast, Red-breast;  
Quhen in came Robin Red-breast,  
Wi' succar-saps and wine---O.

Now, maiden, will ye taste o' this,  
Taste o' this, taste o' this;  
Now, maiden, will ye taste o' this?  
It's succar-saps and wine---O.  
Na, ne'er a drap, Robin,  
Robin, Robin;  
Na, ne'er a drap, Robin,  
Gin it was ne'er so fine---O.

\* \* \* \* \*

And quhere's the ring that I gied ze,  
That I gied ze, that I gied ze;  
And quhere's the ring that I gied ze,  
Ze little cutty quean---O?  
I gied it till an soger,  
A soger, a soger,  
I gied it till a soger,  
A kynd sweet-heart o' myne---O.

2.

Jeny Vran wiz lyin sick, lyin sick, lyin sick,  
Jany Vran wiz lyin sick upon a mortal time;  
In cam Robin Redbreest, Redbreest, Redbreest,  
In cam Robin Redbreest wi' sugar saps an wine;

Says, `Birdie will ye pree this, pree this, pree this?'  
Says, `Birdie will ye pree this, an' ye'll be birdie  
mine?'  
`I winna pree't tho' I should die, tho' I should die,  
tho' I should die,  
I winna pree't tho' I should die, for it cam not in  
time.'

---

(1) Herd (1776), II.209); titled "The Wren; or Lennox Love to Blantyre", this being the tune-name. With music, in SMM V (1796), 497 (no. 483). Chambers SSPB (1862), 242; PRS (1847, 159; 1870, 187) [followed by Ford CR 140, MacLennan SNR (1909), 29, Montgomerie SNR (1946), 142 (no. 176)], has for the last 4 lines: "I gied it till an ox-ee,/ An ox-ee, an ox-ee;/ I gied it till an ox-ee,/ A true sweiheart o' mine, O"--the recipient being the great tit, *Parus major*.

Cf. the incipit of "Gentle Robin".

(2) Gregor (1881), 138, from the north-east.

See ODNR 242 (no. 271), "Jenny Wren fell sick". Halliwell 1842 (p. 48, no. lxxx) gives: Little Jenny Wren fell sick upon a time,/ When in came Robin Red-breast, and brought her bread and wine;/ "Eat, Jenny, drink, Jenny, all shall be thine!"/ Then Jenny she got better, and stood upon her feet,/ And says to little Robin, "I love thee not a bit!"/ Then Robin he was angry and flew upon a twig,/ "Hoot upon thee, fie upon thee, ungrateful chit!" (apparently a variant, whether a memorial version or not, of lines in T. Evans's *Life and Death of Jenny Wren*, c. 1800). ODNR says Herd's version is augmented in Peter Buchan's B.M. MS. (Add. 29408), perhaps by P.B. himself.

Lennox Love to Blantyre appears in John Walsh, *Caledonian Country Dances ii* (c. 1736), as *How can I keep my Maiden-head* (the name of an old indelicate song, as Stenho preserved in MMC [1799, 65] and Sharpe [Ballad Book, 1823 (1880), 54], although there the tune direction is *The Birks of Abergeldie*). Later in Bremner's *Reels* (1757), 17; but before in Margaret Sinkler's *Musick-Book*, 1710 (as *Lennox love to Blanter*) [Glen ESM 138]. See also note to "*The King o' France he ran a race*".

MS

oct99