

Begging Song

Begging Song

(new lyrics by Martin Carthy/Dave Swarbrick)

Of all the trades in England the beggin' is the best
For when a beggar's tired, he can lay him down and rest

And a-beggin' I will go-o-o
And a-beggin' I will go

I got on the train in Carlisle they kicked me out in Crewe
I slept on every paving-stone from there to Waterloo

I got breakfast off the Embankment I got my lunch and tea
And only the finest cardboard made a home that was fit for me

We sit on the stair at Leicester Square from 7 o'clock till ten
Then round the back of the Connaught House for dinner from out of a bin

I can
You men, it is tough to be a king when beggars live so well

The law came down to see us, they came down three together
They put out the fire, they left us there. Oh, Lord, how we did shiver

I am a Victorian value, I'm enterprised poverty
Completely invisible to the state and a joy to Mrs T

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recorded by Carthy/Swarbrick on "Life And Limb" (1990)

This is a rewrite of "A-Beggin' I Will Go" ABEGGIN, sharing the tune, chorus and first verse with the older version. Sorry, but I can't get the fifth verse.

Martin notes: "The Begging Song is a reworking of something which has been around in various forms for three or four hundred years, a version of which I learned in the sixties from Ewan MacColl (and so did a few others). Not that the old song is a failure, more that the re-appearance of beggars on our streets as a matter of course warrants, I think, a more present response from the rest of us."

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