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Green Grow the Lilacs

Green Grow the Lilacs

cho: Green grow the lilacs, all sparkling with dew

I'm lonely, my darling, since parting with you;

But by our next meeting I'll hope to prove true

And change the green lilacs to the Red, White and Blue.

I once had a sweetheart, but now I have none
She's gone and she's left me, I care not for one
Since she's gone and left me, contented I'll be,
For she loves another one better than me.

cho:

I passed my love's window, both early and late
The look that she gave me, it makes my heart ache;
Oh, the look that she gave me was painful to see,
For she loves another one better than me.

cho:

I wrote my love letters in rosy red lines,
She sent me an answer all twisted and twined;
Saying, "Keep your love letters and I will keep mine
Just you write to your love and I'll write to mine."

Note: After Wildwood Flower, this may be the most universally folk-processed song ever. Every version I've seen has at least one alternate locution; I decided that it wasn't worth listing all the variants I've encountered. Lilacs, or Laurels; Red White and Blue or Orange and Blue; "sparkling with dew" or "all wet with the dew" or "and so does the rue" ; "twisted and twined" or "twisted with twine" --- etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. Nobody's quite sure what the words mean (in detail, that is), and probably a lot of the singers mumbled a good deal; in any case, don't worry too much and enjoy. It's a great tune. Oh yes, the story about this being the basis for the Mexican epithet of "gringo" is most likely pure fakelore. RG

Recorded by the Mitchell Trio, Tony Kraber

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