

“The Border of Heaven”

1. The Blessing (Oidhche Mhath Leibh)

Refrain

*Soiridh leibh 'us oidhche mhath leibh
Oidhche mhath leibh, beannachd leibh
Guidheam slÃ inte ghnàth bhi mar ruibh
Oidhche mhath leibh, beannachd leibh*

Mathair uisge 'n tobair fhÃ-oruisg'
Cainnt ar sinnsir brìgh na loinn;
'S faochadh tÃ th o Æ nradh m'inntinn,
'Nuiar bheir rann na glinn a'm chuimhn'

Astar cuain cha dean ar sgaradh
'S dÃ¹rachd daimh am bannaibh toinnt'
Gleidgh an t-Ã gh na dh'fhÃ g a bheannachd
Oidhche mhath leibh, beannachd leibh

Thuit ar crann air saoghal carach
'S coma sud, tha 'mhaitheas leinn
Bidh sinn beÃ an dÃ chas ra-mhath
Oidhche mhath leibh, beannachd leibh

Translation from Scots Gaelic to English

Farewell to you and goodnight to you
Goodnight to you, and blessings go with you
Wishing that good health be yours always
Goodnight to you, and blessings go with you

The goodness of water drawn from the well of pure water
That is the language of our ancestors, the essence of our joy
A gentle soothing of the mind's distress
When a verse reminds me of the glens

The width of an ocean will not separate us
And our good wishes will go to those
Who are connected to us with enduring ties
Keep in good fortune those who've made their farewells
Goodnight to you and blessings go with you

Our lot has fallen in a deceiving world
But in spite of that, virtue will be with us
We will live in constant hope
Goodnight to you and blessings go with you

Words and Music: John McFayden (ca. 1897)

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2. Sweet Betsy from Pike

Have you heard tell of sweet Betsy from Pike
She crossed the wide prairie with her lover, Ike
With two yoke of Oxen, a big yellow dog
A tall Shanghai rooster and one spotted hog

One evening quite early they camped on the Platte
'Twas nearby the road on a green, shady flat
Betsy, sore-footed, lay down to repose
In wonder Ike gazed on his Pike County rose

The Indians came down in a wild yelling horde
And Betsy got scared they would scalp her adored
Under the wagon wheel Betsy did crawl
She fought off them Indians with musket and ball

Out on the prairie one bright starry night
They broke out the whiskey and Betsy got tight
She sang and she shouted, she danced on the plain
She made a great show for that whole wagon train

The Shanghai ran off and the cattle all died
The last piece of bacon that morning was fried
Ike got discouraged and Betsy got made
The dog wagged his tail and looked wondrously sad

They soon reached the desert where Betsy gave out
And down in the sand she lay rolling about
Ike in great terror looked on in surprise
Saying, Betsy get up, you'll get sand in your eyes

Sweet Betsy got up in a great deal of pain
Declared she'd go back to Pike County again
Ike, he just sighed, and they fondly embraced
And she traveled along with her arm round his waist

This bittersweet comic song, first popular in the American gold rush era of 1849-59, describes the hardships and frustrations experienced by pioneer women as they moved west with their families along the immigrant roads. The melody is derived from the old English dance hall song, "Villikens and His Dinah."

From the CD, *The Border of Heaven*, by Connie Dover © Taylor Park Music/Connie Dover

“The Border of Heaven”

3. I am Going to the West

In this fair land, I'll stay no more
Here labor is in vain
I'll seek the mountains far away
And leave the fertile plain

Where waves of grass in oceans roll
Into infinity
I stand ready on the shore
To cross the inland sea
I am going to the West

Chorus

***You say you will not go with me
You turn your eyes away
You say you will not follow me
No matter what I say
I am going to the West,
I am going to the West***

I will journey to the place
That was shaped by heaven's hand
And I will build for me a bower
Where angels' footprints mark the land

Where castle rocks in towers high
Kneel to valleys wild and green
All my thoughts are turned to you,
My waking hope, my sleeping dream
I am going to the West

And when sun gives way to moon
And silver starlight fills the sky
In the arms of these last hills
Is where I'm bound to lie

Wind, my blanket, earth, my bed
My canopy, a tree
Willows by the river's edge
Will whisper me to sleep
I am going to the West

Words & Music: Connie Dover

1st verse and chorus adapted from traditional Alabama folk song

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4. The Streets of Laredo *Medley with "The Sailor Cut Down in His Prime"*

The Sailor Cut Down in His Prime

As I walked out by St. James Hospital
Cold was the morning and wet was the day
Who should I spy but a handsome young sailor
All wrapped up in flannel and colder than clay

His poor old father and his dear old mother
Oft times did warn of the gay city life
But along with those flash girls his money he squandered
And along with those flash girls he took his delight

Then beat the drum over him, play the fife merrily
Sound the dead march as you carry him on
Take him to the churchyard and throw the earth over him
For he's a young sailor cut down in his prime

The Streets of Laredo

As I walked out in the Streets of Laredo
As I walked out in Laredo one day
I spied a young cowboy all dressed in white linen
All dressed in white linen and cold as the clay

I see by your outfit that you are a cowboy
These words he did say as I boldly passed by
Come sit down beside me and hear my sad story
For I'm shot in the breast and I know I must die

Chorus:

***So Beat the drum slowly and play the fife lowly
Play the dead march as you carry me along
Take me to the green valley and lay the sod o'er me
For I'm a young cowboy and I know I've done wrong***

It was once in the saddle I used to go dashing
Once in the saddle I galloped away
It was first to the alehouse and then to the card house
I'm shot in the breast and am dying today

This American Cowboy song of Irish origin has had many incarnations, and its first known publication was in Cork, Ireland in 1790. This rendition of the song combines the Irish ballad with its cowboy counterpart.

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5. Lord Franklin

It was homeward bound one night on the deep
Swinging in my hammock I fell asleep
I dreamt a dream and I thought it true
Concerning Franklin and his gallant crew

As I was wandering on some foreign shore
I heard a lady and she did deplore
She wept aloud and to me did say
Oh, my loving husband, he's so long away

With a hundred seamen he sailed away
To the frozen ocean in the month of May
To seek a passage around the pole
Where these poor sailors do sometimes go

They sailed West and they sailed East
Their ship on oceans of ice did freeze
Only the Eskimo in his skin canoe
Was the only one that ever came through

In Baffin Bay where the whale fishes blow
The fate of Franklin no man may know
The fate of Franklin no tongue can tell
Franklin alone with his sailors do dwell

And now my burden it gives me pain
For my long lost Franklin I would cross the main
Ten thousand pounds would I freely give
To say on earth that my Franklin does live
To say on earth that my Franklin does live

In 1845, Sir John Franklin and his crew of 133 men set sail from England for the Arctic region of northern Canada. In search of the elusive Northwest Passage between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, all hands eventually perished after their ships became trapped in ice. "The fate of Franklin and his gallant crew" was a mystery that has slowly been unraveled over the last 150 years, pieced together by a trail of artifacts, contemporary accounts by native Inuit people and the diligent efforts of generations of researchers and explorers dedicated to discovering the truth behind the legend.

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6. An Spailpín Fánach

Go deo deo arís ní raghad go Caiseal,
Ag díol ná ag reic mo shláinte,
Ná ar mharagadh na saoire im shuí cois balla,
Im scaoinse ar leataoibh sráide,

Bodairí na tíre ag teacht ar a gcapaill,
Dá fhiafraí an bhfuilim hírálta,
"Ó téanam chun siúil tá an cúrsa fada"
Seo ar siúl an Spailpín Fánach.

Im Spailpín Fánach fágadh mise,
Ag seasadh ar mo shláinte,
Ag siúl an drúchta go moch ar maidin,
‘S ag bailiú galair ráithe,

Ní fheicfear corrán im’ láimh chun bainte,
Súiste ná feac beag rainne,
Ach bratacha na bhFranncach os cionn mo leapan,
Is píce agam chun sáite.

3. Mó chúig céad slán chun dúiche m’athar,
‘Gus chun an oileáin ghrámhair,
Is chun buachaill na Cúlach os díobh nár mhiste,
In aimsir chasta an ghárda,

Ach anois ó táimse im chadhan bhocht dhealbh,
Imeasc na ndúichí fáin seo,
‘Sé mo chumha croí mar fuair mé an ghairm,
Bheith riamh im Spailpín Fánach.

4. Is ró-bhreá is cuimhin liom mo dhaoine bheith sealad,
Thiar ag droichead Gháile,
Fé bhuái, fé chaoraí, fé laoi bheaga gheala,
Agus capaill ann le h-áireamh,

Acht b’é toil Chríost é gur cuireadh sinn asta,
‘S go ndeaghamhar i leath ár sláinte,
‘S gurbh é bhris mo chroí i ngach tír dá rachainn,
"Call here, you Spailpín Fánach."

Translation from Irish Gaelic to English:

I will never go again to Caishel
Selling or bartering myself in hire
Or selling my freedom, sitting by the wall
Lounging by the side of the road.
Rude, boorish men from all over the country, coming on
their horses
Asking if I am for hire
Oh, come let us go, the journey is long
The journey of the wandering laborer

I will quit this itinerant laboring
Hiring myself out
Walking over night to early morning
Weary of endless journeying
I would not see a sickle in my hand for reaping
A flail for threshing nor a small spade handle
But rather, the colors of the French flying over my head
And a pike in my hand to thrust forth

Five hundred farewells to the town of my father
And to my beloved island
And to the boys of Luach, sure there was no harm in them
During the times we tangled with the Garda
But now, since I am in my poor destitute cell
In the midst of my own native land, outcast
My heart is full of woe, that I ever go the calling
To be a wandering laborer

It's well I remember when my parents were hewing
Over at Gaile bridge
With oxen, with sheep with bright young calves
And horses to take care of
But it was the will of Christ that it was taken from us
And we were put out for hire
And it would break my heart, every where I would go, to
hear
"Call here, you spailpín fánach"

"An Spailpín Fánach" is an early Irish version of a song that became one of America's most widely known folk tunes. Known originally as "The Bard of Armagh," the melody migrated westward, evolving eventually into a popular song, "The Girl I Left Behind Me."

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7. Last Night by the River

Neither wind nor bird
That was my voice you heard
Last night by the river
In the wind that stirred the grass
And whispered when you passed
That was my voice you heard

Neither wind nor bird
That was my heart you heard
Last night by the River
Making thunder through the land,
Shaking earth where you did stand
That was my heart you heard

Neither wind nor bird
That was my blood you heard
Last night by the river
Pouring into your heart's lake
Running redder for your sake
That was my blood you heard

In the moonlight through the pines
In the deepest part of night
My heart called your name
Last night by the river

Music by Connie Dover

Lyrics by Connie Dover, inspired by the traditional Shoshone love poem, "Neither Spirit nor Bird."

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8. The Water Is Wide

The water is wide, I cannot cross o'er
And neither have I wings to fly
Give me a boat that will carry two
And both shall row, my love and I

I leaned my back against an oak
Thinking it was a mighty tree
But first it bent, and then it broke
Just as my love proved false to me

There is a ship that sails the sea
It's loaded deep, as deep can be
But not so deep as the love I'm in
I know not if I sink or swim

Oh, love is handsome, love is kind
Love is a jewel when it is new
But when it's old, it grows so cold
And fades away like morning dew

An American folk song derived from the traditional Scots ballad, "The Douglas Tragedy."

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9. Wondrous Love

What wondrous love is this, oh my soul, oh my soul
What wondrous love is this, oh my soul
What wondrous love is this, that caused the Lord of Bliss
To send such perfect peace to my soul, to my soul
To send such perfect peace to my soul

Ye winged angels fly, bear the news, bear the news
Ye winged angels fly, bear the news
Ye winged angels fly, like comets through the sky
With loud and joyful cry, bear the news, bear the news
With loud and joyful cry, bear the news

To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing
To God and to the Lamb I will sing
To God and to the Lamb, Jehovah, great I AM
And to the Son of man I will sing, I will sing
And to the Son of man I will sing

When we're from sorrow free, we'll sing on, we'll sing on
When we're from sorrow free, we'll sing on
When we're from sorrow free, we'll rise and joyful be
And through Eternity, we'll sing on, we'll sing on
And through eternity, we'll sing on

19th Century American shape note hymn

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10. Winter's Night

As I rode out last winter's night
A drinkin' of sweet wine
Conversin' with that pretty little girl
That stole this heart of mine

Who will shoe your pretty little foot
Who will glove your hand
Who will kiss your ruby red lips
Who will be your man

*Who will be your man, my love
Who will be your man
Who will kiss your ruby red lips
And who will be your man*

Mama will shoe my pretty little foot
Papa will glove my hand
You never will kiss my ruby red lips
And I don't need no man

*I don't need no man, my love
I don't need no man
You never will kiss my ruby red lips
And I don't need no man*

The longest train that ever I saw
Was a hundred wagons long
The only girl I ever did love
Is with that train and gone

*With that train and gone, my love
With that train and gone
The only girl I ever did love
Is on that train and gone*

I wish to the Lord I'd never been born
Or roamed when I was young
I'd never have seen her rosy cheeks
Nor heard her lyin' tongue

*Heard her lyin' tongue, my love
Heard her lying tongue
I'd never have seen her rosy red cheeks
Nor heard her lyin' tongue*

Many verses of this American folk song are common in ballads throughout the Southern United States, and also appear in the tragic Scottish ballad, "The Lass of Loch Royal."

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11. My Dearest Dear

My dearest dear, the time is near when I and you must part
And no one knows the inner grief of my poor aching heart
And what I suffer for your sake, for the one I love so dear
I wish that I could go with you or you could tarry here

I wish my heart were made of glass, that in it I might behold
Your name in secret I would write in letters of bright gold
Your name in secret I would write, pray believe me when I say
You are the one that I love best until my dying day

Mo gra thu, A stoirin

(Irish Galiec: "I love you, my Darling")

And when you're on some distant shore think on your absent friend
And when the wind blows high and clear, a line or two pray send
And when the wind blows high and clear, pray send it love to me
That I may know by your hand-write how times have gone with thee

My dearest dear, the time is near when I and you must part
And no one knows the inner grief of my poor aching heart
And what I suffer for your sake, for the one I love so dear
I wish that I could go with you or you could tarry here

English Folk Song from Southern Appalachia

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12. Brother Green

Oh Brother Green, please come to me
For I am shot and bleeding
Dear brother, stay, and put me away
And write my love a letter

Tell her I know she's prayed for me
And now her prayers are answered
That I might be prepared to die
If I should fall in battle

The Northern foe has laid me low
On this cold ground to suffer
And now to heaven I will fly
To see my dear old mother

Go tell my love she must not grieve
Go kiss my little sisters
For they will call their brother in vain
When he is up in heaven

I have one brother in this wide world
He's fighting for the Union
But oh, dear love, I've lost my life
And I shall die a Southern

My darlin' girl, I love her well
Oh could I once more see her
That I might give a sweet farewell
And meet again in heaven

One of the sources for my adaptation of this American Civil War song comes from the singing of Mrs. Emma Dusenberry, of Mena, Arkansas, as printed in Ozark Folksongs, edited by Vance Randolph. Versions also exist in Tennessee, Illinois and Missouri. The melody is derived from "Barbry Ellen," an American variant of the well-known Scottish ballad, "Barbara Allen."

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