

# Some Irish Songs For My Nana

Irish folk songs for grandparents and *grand* kids!



## MaryLee

### LYRICS

1. Londonderry Aire (“Acushla Mine” or “O, Danny Boy”) (traditional) 4:00
2. Cockles & Mussels (traditional) 3:24
3. The Gypsy Rover (© 1951 Leo McGuire) 4:21
4. When First I Saw Sweet Nellie (Samuel Lover 1797-1868) 3:08
5. Three Irish Waltzes: My Wild Irish Rose, Too Ra Loo Ra Loo Ra,  
When Irish Eyes Are Smiling (Chauncey Olcott, circa 1900) 3:09
6. Wearin’ Of The Green (words: Dion Boucicault 1822-1890, music: traditional) 2:27
7. Fly Not Yet (words: Thomas Moore 1779-1852, music: traditional) 1:28
8. Potatoes Are Under The Ground (©1992 MaryLee Sunseri) 2:18
9. Leprechaun, Leprechaun (© 1992 MaryLee Sunseri) 7:48
10. St. Patrick Was A Gentleman (Quackenbush/traditional) 1:53
11. McNamara’s Band (© 1917 Stamford/O’Conner) 2:57
12. The Unicorn (The Irish Rovers) 3:22
13. Little Beggarman (traditional) 2:11
14. Gartan Mother’s Lullaby (traditional) 2:52

Produced, Performed, Arranged and Engineered by MaryLee Sunseri

Dedicated with love to my Nana: Rose Burke Duval 1900-2000

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### **LONDONDERRY AIRE (Oh, Danny Boy)**

1. O Danny Boy, the pipes, the pipes are calling from glen to glen and down the mountainside. The summer's gone and all the leaves are falling. It's you, it's you must go and I must bide. But come ye back when summer's in the meadow, or when the valley's hushed and white with snow. It's I'll be here in sunshine or in shadow. O, Danny boy, O, Danny, boy, I love you so!

2. Acushla, mine, the singing bird is calling the call of love that's meant for lover's true. 'Tis autumn time and where the leaves are falling alone I wait to beg a word with you. 'Tis of my love, my love I would be pleading. Around my heart your fingers you entwine. We'll wander on as long as we're together and wander into paradise, Acushla, mine.

3. Mavourneen, dear, your lips are ever smiling. They smiled their way into my longing heart. Your roguish eyes, to me are so beguiling, I pray the saints that never we may part. And through the years no matter what the weather, around my heart your love will still entwine. We'll wander on as long as we're together and wander into paradise, Acushla, mine.

### **COCKLES AND MUSSELS**

1. In Dublin's fair city where the girls are so pretty t'was there I first met with sweet Molly Malone. She wheeled her wheel barrow through the streets broad and narrow crying, "Cockles and mussels, alive, alive, oh!"

2. She was a fishmonger and sure t'was no wonder for so were her father and her mother before. They all wheeled their barrows through the streets broad and narrow, crying "Cockles and mussels, alive, alive, oh!"

3. But she died of the fever and nothing could save her and that was the end of sweet Molly Malone. But her ghost wheels her barrow through the streets broad and narrow crying, "Cockles and mussels, alive, alive, oh!"

### **THE GYPSY ROVER**

1. The gypsy rover came over the hill, bound for the valley so shady. He whistled and he sang 'til the greenwoods rang and he won the heart of a lady.

2. She left her own father's castle gate. She left her own fond lover. She left her servants and and her state to follow the gypsy rover.

3. Her father saddled up his fastest steed; roamed the valleys all over; sought his daughter at break-neck speed and the whistling gypsy rover.

4. He came at last to a mansion fine, down by the river Clady. And there was music and ther was wine for the gypsy and his lady.

5. "He is no gypsy, my father," said she, "But lord of these lands all over. And I will stay till my dying day with my whistling gypsy rover."

### **WHEN FIRST HE SAW SWEET NELLIE**

1. When first he saw sweet Nellie, 'twas on a market day. A low-backed car she drove and sat upon a tuft of hay. But when that hay was bloomin' grass and decked with flow'rs of spring, no flow'r was there that could compare with the bloomin' girl I sing. As she sat in her low-backed car, the man at the turn-pike bar never asked for the toll but just rubbed his old poll and looked after the low-backed car.

2. In battle's wild commotion the proud and mighty Mars with hostile scythes demands his tithes of death in war-like cars. But, Nellie, peaceful goddess, has darts in her bright eyes that knock men down in the market town as right and left they fly. While she sits in her low-backed car then battle more dangerous far. For the doctor's art cannot cure the heart that is hit from the low-backed car.

3. Sweet Nellie round her car, sir, has strings of ducks and geese, but the scores of hearts she slaughters by far outnumber these. While she among her poultry sits just like a turtle dove, well worth the cage he would engage of the bloomin' god of love. While she sits in her low-backed car the lovers come near and far and envy the chicken that Nellie is pickin' while she sits in her low-backed car.

4. He's rather own that car, sir, with Nellie by his side than a coach-and-four and gold galore and a lady for his bride. For the lady would sit forinst him on a cushion made with taste, while Nellie would sit beside him with his arm around her waist. As they drove in the low-backed car to be married by Father Maher, oh, his heart would beat high at her glance and her sigh tho' it beat in a low-backed car.

### **THREE IRISH WALTZES**

My wild Irish Rose! The sweetest flow'r that grows. You may search everywhere but none can compare with my wild Irish Rose. My wild Irish Rose! The dearest flow'r that grows! And someday for my sake she may let me take the bloom from my wild Irish Rose...

Too ra loo ra loo ra, too ra loor ra lai, Too ra loo ra loora, hush, now don't you cry  
Too ra loo ra loo ra, too ra loor ra lai, Too ra loo ra loora, that's an Irish lullaby!

When Irish eyes are smiling, sure it's like a morn in spring! In the lilt of Irish laughter you can hear the angels sing! When Irish hearts are happy all the world seems bright and gay! And when Irish eyes are smiling, sure, they'll steal your heart away!

### **WEARIN' OF THE GREEN**

1.O, Paddy, dear, and did you hear the news that's goin' round? The shamrock is forbid by law to grow on Irish ground. St. Patrick's day no more to keep, his color can't be seen. For there's a bloody law against the wearin' of the green. I met with Napper Tandy and he took me by the hand and he says "How's poor old Ireland?" and "How does she stand?" She's the most distressful country that you have ever seen. They're hangin' men and women there for the wearin' of the green.

2. Then since the color we must wear is England's cruel red, sure Ireland's sons will n'er forget the blood that they have shed. You may take the shamrock from your hat and cast it on the sod, but 'twill take root and flourish still tho' under foot 'tis trod. When the law can stop the blades of grass from growin' as they grow, and when the leaves of summertime their verdure dare not show. Then I will change the color that I wear in my corbeen. But till that day, please God I'll stick to wearin' of the green.

3. But if at last our color should be torn from Ireland's heart, her sons in shame and sorrow from the dear old soil will part. I've heard whisper of a country that lies far beyond the sea, where rich and poor stand equal in the light of freedom's day. Oh, Erin, must we leave you driven by the tyrant's hand? Must we seek a mother's welcome from a strange but happier land? Where the cruel cross of England's thralldom never shall be seen and where, thank God, we'll live and die still wearin' of the green!

### **FLY NOT YET**

Fly not yet, 'tis just the hour when pleasure like the midnight flower that scorns the eye of vulgar light begins to bloom for sons of night and maids who love the moon.

'Twas but to bless these hours of shade that beauty and the moon were made.  
'Tis then their soft attractions flowing set the tides and goblets flowing...

O, stay...O, stay...Joy so seldom weaves a chain like this, tonight, that, oh, 'tis pain to break the links so soon!

## **POTATOES ARE UNDER THE GROUND**

1. There's an Irish rainbow above the green mountain and a little white house by the sea. And sham-rocks are growin' where the rivers are flowin' and potatoes are under the ground...
- 2....and a road leading off to the sea. There's a horse to ride and a dog by my side...
3. ...and a sweet Irish harp callin' me. The bagpipes and fiddle play diddle um...
4. ...and leprechauns tall as your knee. Remember the mound where the pot 'o gold's found...

## **ST. PATRICK WAS A GENTLEMAN**

1. St. Patrick was a gentleman, he came from decent people. He built his church in Dublin town and on it was a steeple. His father was a Callaghan, his mother was a Grady, his sister was a Houlihan, his brother was a Brady...Here's to bold St. Patrick's fist, he was a saint so clever he gave the toads and frogs a twist and banished snakes forever.
2. There's not a mile on the Emerald Isle where the dirty vermin musters. Where 'ere he put his dear forefoot he wiped them out in clusters. The frogs went hop, the toads went plop, kirsplash into the water. The snakes packed up their bags and fled to save themselves from slaughter...

**McNAMARA'S BAND**1. Oh, my name is McNamara I'm the leader of the band and tho' we're small in number we're the best in all the land. Oh, I am the conductor and we often have to play with all the best musicianers you hear about today!

*Refrain: Well, the drums go bang the cymbals clang the horns will blaze away! McCarthy puffs the old bassoon while Doyle the pipes will play. Oh, Hennesey Tennessee tootles the flute, my word 'tis something grand! A credit to old Ireland, boys, is McNamara's band (continued on next page...)*

2. Whenever an election's on we play on either side. The way we play our fine old airs fill hearts with Irish pride. Oh, if poor Tom Moore was livin' now he'd make yez understand. No one can do him justice like old McNamara's band.
3. We play at wakes and weddings and at every county ball and at any great man's funeral we play "Dead March In Saul!" When the Prince of Wales to Ireland came he shook me by the hand and said he'd never seen the likes of McNamara's Band!

## **THE UNICORN**

A long time ago, when the world was green, there were more kinds of animals than you've ever seen. They'd run around free when the earth was bein' born, but the loveliest of them all was the unicorn. *There were green alligators and long-necked geese, some humpty-back camels and some chimpanzees, some cats and rats and elephants, but sure as you're born, the loveliest of them all was the unicorn.*

2. Now, God seen some sinnin' and it gave him pain. He says, "Stand back! I'm gonna make it rain!" He says, "Hey, bother Noah, I'll tell you what to do— build me a floatin' zoo!"
3. Old Noah was there to answer the call. He finished makin' the ark just as the rain started to fall. He marched in the animals two-by-two and he call out as they went through...
4. Then Noah looked out through the drivin' rain. Them unicorns were hidin' playin' silly games. A'kickin' and a'splashin' while the rain was pourin'! All them silly unicorns!

5. The ark started movin' and driftin' with the tide. The unicorns looked up from the rocks and they cried and the waters came down and sort of floated them away. And that's why you've never seen a unicorn to this very day.

### **LITTLE BEGGARMAN**

1. I am a little beggarman, a'beggin' I have been for three score or more on this little isle of green. I'm known from the Liffey down to Segoo and I'm known by the name of Ol' Johnny Do. Of all the trades a'goin' now sure, beggin' is the best for when a man is tired he can lay down and rest. Beg for his dinner, he has nothin' else to do only cut around the corner with his old rig-a-doo.

2. I slept in the barn way down at Court O'Vaughn, I went to bed at morn and I slept until the dawn with holes in the roof and the rain comin' thru' and the cats and the rats they were playin' peek-a-boo. Well, who should awaken but the woman of the house with her white spotty apron and her calico blouse. She began to frighten and I said, "Boo! Don't be afraid, M'am, it's only Johnny Do."

3. I met a little flaxy-haired girl one day. "Good mornin' little flaxy-haired girl" I did say. "Good mornin' little beggarman and how do you do with your rags and your bags and your old rig-a-doo? I'll buy yer pair of leggins and a collar and a tie!" and a nice fine lady I'll fetch by and by. "I'll buy yer pair o'goggles and color them blue!" An old-fashioned lady I will make her, too.

4. Over the roads with my pack on my back. Over the fields with my great heavy sack with holes in me shoes and me toes peepin' thru' it's a skidamarinkadoodle-oh, it's old Johnny Do. I must be goin' to bed for it's getting' late at night, the fire's all raked and out goes the light and now you've heard the story of my old rig-a-doo...It's "Goodbye and God be with you!" says Ol' Johnny Do!

### **GARTAN MOTHER'S LULLABY**

Sleep, oh babe, for the red bee hums the silent twilight fall.  
Sheevra from the grey rock comes to wrap the world in thrall.  
M'le anabh thu my child, my joy, my love, my heart's desire,  
The crickets sing you a lullaby beside the dyin' fire.

Dusk is drawn and the Green Man's thorn is wreathed in rings of fog.  
Sheevra sails his boat 'til dawn across the starry bog.  
M'le anabh thu, the fairy moon hath brimmed her course with dew  
And weeps to hear the sad, sweet song I sing, oh love, to you!