

Young Mary

As sung by
Charles Dietz
09-02-1946 Monroe, WI

Young Mary

One night when the wind it blew cold, Blew bit-ter-ly a-cross the wild moor Young
Mar-y she came with her child, wandering back to her own fa-ther's door cry-ing
fa-ther, I pray, let me in Have pi-ty on me, I im-plore Or, the
child at my bos-om will die From the winds that blow 'cross the wild moor

Verse 1.

One night when the wind it blew cold,
Blew bitterly across the wild moor,
Young Mary she came with her child
Wandering back to her own father's door,
Crying, "Father, I pray let me in
Have pity on me I implore,
Or the child at my bosom will die
From the winds that blow 'cross the wild
moor."

Verse 2.

But her father was deaf to her cry
Not a voice or a sound reached the door
But the watch dog did howl, and the wind
Blew bitterly across the wild moor.
Oh how must the old man have felt
When he came to the door the next morn,
There he found Mary dead, and her child
Fondly clasped in her dead mother's arms.

Verse 3.

Then in frenzy he tore his gray hair
As on Mary he gazed at the door
Ah that night she had perished and died
From the winds that blow cross the wild
moor.
The old man in grief pined away,
The child to the grave was soon borne,
And no one lives there to this day,
The cottage to ruin has gone.

But the villagers point at the spot
Where the willow drooped over the door
Saying, "There Mary perished and died,
From the winds that blow cross the wild
moor."

Transcription and lyrics from the Helene Stratman-Thomas Collection.

Critical Commentary

Transcriptions by Peters, p. 216, and HST

HST notes:

In the Professional Papers series:

(*Mary of the Wild Moor*)

Sung by Charles Dietz, age 75, Monroe, 1946.

Mr. Dietz learned this song from his English mother, who came to Wisconsin from New York State. His melody is practically identical with that in Eddy's Ohio collection.

Editor's notes:

This song originated in England, and is known in "remote sections of America" (Scarborough 335). McNeil claims it was probably from an English broadside, but the earliest known publication is sheet music from Boston (Oliver Ditson) in 1845, credited to Joseph W. Turner. However, the American Turner may not have written the song, since the word "moor" is more common in British English than in American, and because some English versions use a different tune (McNeil 132-3).

Alternate titles/related songs: "Poor Mary," "The Wind that Blew o'er the Wild Moor," "Mary on the Wild Moor."

Sources:

Eddy, Mary O., collector and arranger. *Ballads and Songs from Ohio*. Hanford. New York, J. J. Augustin, 1939.

Flanders, Helen Hartness, Elizabeth Flanders Ballard, George Brown, and Phillips Barry, collectors, transcribers, and editors. *The New Green Mountain Songster: Traditional Folk Songs of Vermont*. New Haven: Yale University Press; London: H. Milford: Oxford University Press, 1939. "The wind that blew o'er the wild moor"

<http://sniff.numachi.com/~rickheit/dtrad/pages/tiWLDMOOR1;ttWLDMOOR1.html> "Mary on the wild moor" tune rather different. Citation: From *Folk-Songs of the South*, Cox.

McCaskey, John Piersol. *Franklin Square Song Collection. No. 7: Two-Hundred Favorite Songs and Hymns For Schools and Homes, Nursery and Fireside*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1881.

McNeil, W.K., ed. *Southern Folk Ballads*, vol. 1. The American Folklore Series, ed. W.K. McNeil. Little Rock: August House Publishers, 1987.

Newman, Katharine D. *Never Without a Song: The Years and Songs of Jennie Devlin, 1865-1952*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995. "Mary of the wild moor"

Peters, Harry B., ed. *Folk Songs out of Wisconsin: An Illustrated Compendium of Words and Music*. Madison, WI: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1977.

Randolph, Vance, collector and editor. *Ozark Folksongs*. Vol. I. Columbia, Mo.: State Historical Society of Missouri, 1946-50. "The Wild Moor"

Scarborough, Dorothy. *A Song Catcher in Southern Mountains; American Folk Songs of British Ancestry*. New York, Columbia University Press, 1937.

K.G.