

# O Mary, Don't You Weep, Don't You Mourn

Informant/Performer:

Fisk University Jubilee Singers Quartet -  
John Wesley Work II, James A. Myers,  
J. Everett Harris, Lemuel L. Foster, 1915

Source:

Fisk Jubilee Singers, Vol. 2, 1915-1920  
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O Ma - ry, don't you weep, don't you mourn,  
O Ma - ry, don't you weep, don't you mourn  
Be - cause Pha - raoh's ar - my got drown - ded,  
O Ma - ry, don't you weep.

Transcribed by Anne Laskey

1. Solo: I don't know what my mother wants to stay here for,  
This old world is no friend of her

Group: Because Pharaoh's army got drown-ded.  
O Mary, don't you weep.  
(Chorus)

2. Solo: Some of these mornings bright and fair,  
Gonna hatch my wings and cleave the air

Group: Because...  
(Chorus)

3. Solo: When I get to heaven gonna put on my shoes,  
Gonna run around glory and tell all the news

Group: Because...  
(Chorus)

4. Solo: When I get to heaven gonna sing and shout,  
There's nobody there for to turn me out

Group: Because...  
(Chorus)

This spiritual is often sung with additional  
"floating verses" such as:

If I could I surely would  
Stand on the rock where Moses stood.

I went down in the valley to pray,  
My soul got happy and I stayed all day.

God gave Noah the rainbow sign:  
No more water, but the fire next time.

## Background Information

Like Jacob's dream of the ladder ascending into heaven, the drowning of Pharaoh's army is a motif or leitmotif of several old spirituals. The song "occurs in variant versions in most of the printed collections, beginning with Higginson (*Atlantic*, 1867, xix, 685)" (Newman I. White, *American Negro Folk Songs*). This recording is the earliest recorded version.