

Sleep, My Baby, Sleep

Informant/Performer:
William Brown
Hepler, PA, 1947

Source:
Walter E. Boyer, Albert F. Buffington
and Don Yoder
Songs Along the Mahantongo
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Folklore Center, 1951

Schloof, Bob - be - li, Schloof! Der Daa - di hiet_ die Schoof.

Die Mam - mi hiet_ die brau - ne Kieh Und kummt net heem bis Marri - ye frieh.

Schloof, Bob - be - li, Schloof!

English version:

1. Sleep, my baby, sleep!
Your Daddy's tending the sheep.
Your Mommy's taken the cows away,
And won't come home till break of day.
Sleep, my baby, sleep!
2. Sleep, my baby, sleep!
Your Daddy's tending the sheep.
Your Mommy's tending the little ones,
Baby sleeps as long as he wants.
Sleep, my baby, sleep!
3. Sleep, my baby, sleep!
Your Daddy's tending the sheep.
Your Mommy's cooking Schnitz today,
Daddy's keeping the bugs away!
Sleep, my baby, sleep!
4. Sleep, my baby, sleep!
Your Daddy's tending the sheep.
Your Mommy's gone off on a gossiping flight,
And won't be back till late tonight!
Sleep, my baby sleep!

Background Information

Memories of earliest childhood are associated with this little song, the beloved and universally known lullaby, "Schloof, Bobbeli, Schloof." Almost every family seems to have had its favorite version of it, and many of them are still in active use in our valley...

In the first stanza, the one which is most commonly known, a primitive pastoral setting is suggested. We can readily imagine its origin in the mountains of Germany where a young mother with her first child in her arms sat in the shade of an evergreen tree "minding" the cows, and sang to the child her dreams of the father who was guarding the sheep in the upper hills and would remain with them through the night.

But in Pennsylvania, this lullaby often lost its pastoral setting and took on a more humorous character. The verse which tells of a mother who has gone off on a gossiping trip while her husband presumably remains at home and rocks the cradle, seems to be of rather late vintage and probably immortalizes a certain "gad-about."