

On the Banks of the Old Tennessee

Informant/Performer:
Lou Jordan
Farmington, AR, 1941

Source:
Vance Randolph
Ozark Folksongs (4 Vols.)
Columbia, Mo.: State
Historical Society of Missouri, 1946-48

The musical score is written on four staves in 2/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The melody is simple and folk-like. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words hyphenated across measures. The first line ends with a comma and a blank line for a continuation. The second line also ends with a comma and a blank line. The third line ends with a comma. The fourth line ends with a double bar line.

If I were a lit - tle fish, _____

I would - n't swim in the sea, _____

I'd swim in the brook where my Ka - ty baits her hook,

On the banks of the old Ten - nes - see.

2. If I was a little bird,
I wouldn't build my nest in a tree.
I would build my nest in my true love's breast
On the banks of the old Tennessee.