

Come and I Will Sing You

Source:

Elizabeth Poston, ed.

The Second Book of Christmas Carols

Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Books, 1970

Group 1 *Group 2*



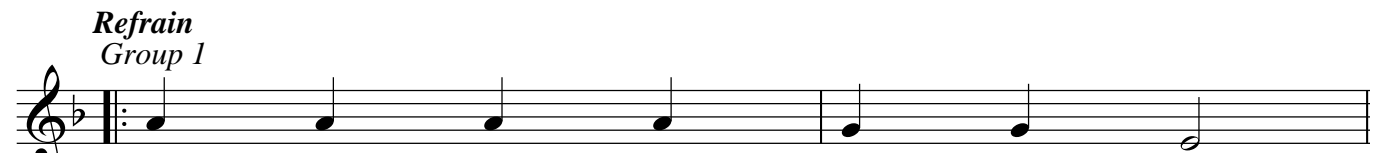
Come and I will sing you. What shall I sing you?

Group 1 *Group 2*



I will sing you one a - lone. What shall be the one a - lone?

Refrain
Group 1

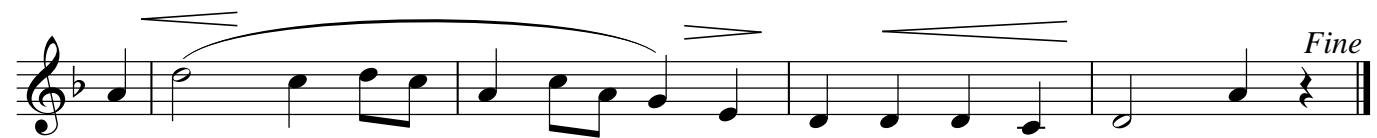


One is one, and one a - lone.

All



Come to me dil - ly come dal - ly come dil - ly



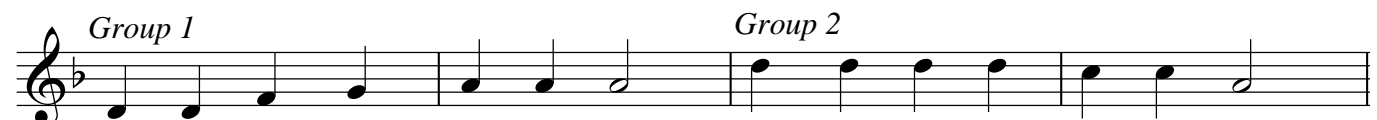
A - lone, _____ and e - ver shall re - main so.

Group 1 *Group 2*




Come and I will sing you. What shall I sing you?

Group 1 *Group 2*



I will sing you two of them. What shall be the two of them?
three
etc.

All *To Refrain*



Two are the Chris - sy - mas babes in green,
Three are
etc. etc.

2. Come and I will sing you.
 What shall I sing you?
 I will sing you two of them.
 What shall be the two of them?
 Two are the Chrissy-mas babes in green,
 One is one, etc.
3. Three are the three that's in Bethlea,
4. Four's the gospellers at the door,
5. Five are the oxen standing by,
6. Six the six that never did mix,
7. Seven the shiners up in the sky,
8. Eight of them are the filly-shine white,
9. Nine of them's Aunt Mary Ann,
10. Ten are the ten commandments,
11. 'Leven eleven all gone to heaven,
12. Twelve's the followers all in a row,

Background Information

"Come And I Will Sing You', a form of the 'Carol of the Twelve Numbers', belongs to a class of cumulative song of several names, e.g. 'Green grow the rashies, O', 'The Dilly Song', and of considerable antiquity, its earliest form traceable to the Hebrew version in the Service for the First Night of the Passover. The song occurs in various forms in England, from thence in America. Most of the versions have common denominators; all agree in the symbolism of One, the God 'whose name shall be One' (Zechariah xiv, 9). The song's fascination lies largely in its incantatory magic and the weird and garbled lines, some nonsensical, that have crept in down the centuries, all, whether sense or nonsense, the long accretions of a folk ritual of striking effect. . .

The two Chrissy-mas babes conform to the accepted reference as to the infant Christ and St. John Baptist. The significance of green is uncertain but would seem to carry implications of the ancient lore of the greenwood. The three in Bethlea refers presumably to the Holy Family in Bethlehem, the word sometimes thus abbreviated in American folk singing. Six, according to some versions, including the French Canadian, refers to the six waterpots of the miracle of Can of Galilee (John II. 309), though it makes scant sense here. The more obvious interpretation of the seven shiners is the constellation of the Plough (Ursa Major); the mystical interpretation is that of the seven stars in the right hand of the Son of Man in the vision of St. John the Divine (Revelations 1.10-16). Eight is corrupt (? fellowship white - possibly the blessed souls of the heavenly host). Nine is perhaps a local allusion to promontories of the Pacific seaboard all named by the early navigators after the same woman. Eleven is generally accepted as referring to the Apstoles without Judas; twelve, as the twelve Apostles."