

I'm goin'-a sing when the Spirit says sing

117

The message here might be: listen to the Spirit, rather than the slave owner.



- 1 I'm goin'-a sing when the Spir - it says sing. I'm goin'-a
- 2 I'm goin'-a pray when the Spir - it says pray. I'm goin'-a
- 3 I'm goin'-a moan when the Spir - it says moan. I'm goin'-a
- 4 I'm goin'-a shout when the Spir - it says shout. I'm goin'-a



sing when the Spir-it says sing. I'm goin'-a sing when the Spir-it says
 pray when the Spir-it says pray. I'm goin'-a pray when the Spir-it says
 moan when the Spir-it says moan. I'm goin'-a moan when the Spir-it says
 shout when the Spir-it says shout. I'm goin'-a shout when the Spir-it says



sing, and o - bey the Spir - it of the Lord.
 pray, and o - bey the Spir - it of the Lord.
 moan, and o - bey the Spir - it of the Lord.
 shout, and o - bey the Spir - it of the Lord.

"I'm goin'-a sing" is in the public domain.

Swing low, sweet chariot

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Origin of this spiritual is unknown, but there are two stories which have circulated.

Sarah Hannah Sheppard, mother of Ella Sheppard of Fisk Jubilee Singers. Ella was born on a Tennessee plantation in 1851. Sarah heard that her master intended to sell her to another plantation, separating her from Ella. She headed to the Cumberland River, intending to drown herself and her daughter. According to the story, she was stopped by an "old mammy" who told Sarah to "let the chariot of the Lord swing low." The old woman reached toward heaven, pulled down an imaginary scroll, and prophesied that Ella would one day stand before kings and queens. Sarah listened, went back to her plantation, and was sold and taken to Mississippi. Ella performed before royalty with the Fisk Jubilee Singers. She eventually reunited with her mother and brought her to live with her in Nashville.

OR

Wallace Willis, a slave, lived on a plantation owned by Brit Willis, a half-Choctaw Indian, in Mississippi. The U.S. government ordered the Choctaw to relocate to southern Oklahoma in the 1830's and Brit took Wallace and Minerva along. He rented out "Uncle Wallace" to a nearby school for Native American boys, where Willis entertained by singing spirituals he composed, including "Swing low, sweet chariot." The school's headmaster wrote it down and shared it, along with several other spirituals, with the Fisk Jubilee Singers when he heard them in concert in New Jersey.

Refrain

Swing low, sweet char - i - ot, com-ing for to car-ry me home.

Swing low, sweet char - i - ot, com-ing for to car-ry me home.

1 I looked o - ver Jor - dan, and what did I see,
 2 If you get . . . there . . . be - fore . . . I do,
 3 The bright - est . . . day . . . that ev - er I saw,
 4 I'm some - times . . up, . . . I'm some - times down,

com-ing for to car - ry me home? A band of an - gels
 com-ing for to car - ry me home; tell all my friends I'm
 com-ing for to car - ry me home; when Je - sus washed my
 com-ing for to car - ry me home; but still my soul feels

Refrain

com-ing af - ter me, com-ing for to car - ry me home.
 com - ing . . . too, com-ing for to car - ry me home.
 sins . . . a - way, com-ing for to car - ry me home.
 heav-en - ly . . . bound, com-ing for to car - ry me home.

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Steal away

103

Also possibly written by Willis.

Double meaning again: says Grandma Betsy Bradford, a former slave, “Steal away to Jesus’ always meant to go up north to the promised land.” Nat Turner used “Steal away” to call his conspirators together.

God’s judgment speaks to the “trembling sinner through the mystery and fear of wind, thunder, and lightning.”

Refrain

Steal a - way, steal a - way, steal a - way to Je - sus!

Steal a - way, steal a-way home, I ain't got long to stay here.



1 My Lord calls me, he calls me by the thun - der;
 2 Green trees are bend - ing, poor sin - ners stand a - trem - bling;
 3 Tomb - stones are burst - ing, poor sin - ners stand a - trem - bling;
 4 My Lord calls me, he calls me by the light - ning;



the trum-pet sounds with-in - a my soul, I ain't got long to stay here.

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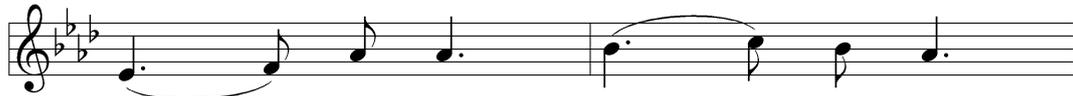
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Oh, freedom!

225

A post-Civil War African-American freedom song. Protest song!

Made popular by the singer Odetta during the Civil Rights movement, and also by Joan Baez and the 1963 March on Washington.



1 Oh, free - dom, oh, free - dom,
 2 No more moan - ing, no more moan - ing,
 3 There'll be sing - ing, there'll be sing - ing,
 4 There'll be shout - ing, there'll be shout - ing,
 5 There'll be pray - ing, there'll be pray - ing,



oh, free-dom o - ver me,
 no more moan-ing o - ver me,
 there'll be sing - ing o - ver me, and be - fore I'd be a slave, I'll be
 there'll be shout-ing o - ver me,
 there'll be pray - ing o - ver me,



bur-ied in my grave, and go home to my Lord, and be free.

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Thank you for joining us for Song Lovers Online #6. We pray you're well, and look forward to the time when we can assemble and sing these songs as a community. Peace.

Additional research from Wikipedia, articles on "Steal Away" and "Wallace Willis," accessed June 3, 2020. And Library of Congress, Toni P. Anderson, "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot"- The Fisk University Jubilee Quartet (1909), added to the National Registry: 2002. Accessed June 3, 2020.