

Say Darling Say

Key of D Major

Traditional American Old-Time

Transcribed by Mary Jane Howie



ABOUT THIS SONG

An old-time courting song, cut on record in 1928 and older than that in the mountains. Public domain, so this page is yours to copy and hand around. Jams call it in D. The whole song is one six bar phrase, sung over and over with a new verse each time. The last line, Say darling say, closes every verse. The second set of verses borrows from the lullaby Hush Little Baby, which is common in the tradition.

ALL VERSES

Say, little darling, won't you marry me,
Live in a holler 'neath the old oak tree,
Say, darling, say.

'Neath the old oak tree, we'll make our home,
Nevermore this world to roam,
Say, darling, say.

Say, little darling, if you were mine,
You wouldn't do nothing but starch and iron,
Say, darling, say.

Starch and iron would be your trade,
I'd get drunk and lay in the shade,
Say, darling, say.

Live in the holler 'neath the old oak tree,
Children bouncing on daddy's knee,
Say, darling, say.

Hush, little darling, don't say a word,
Papa's gonna buy you a mockingbird,
Say, darling, say.

If that mockingbird don't sing,
I'm gonna buy you a diamond ring,
Say, darling, say.

If that diamond ring is brass,
Mama's gonna buy you a looking glass,
Say, darling, say.

If that looking glass gets broke,
I'm gonna buy you a billy goat,
Say, darling, say.

If that billy goat won't pull,
Papa's gonna buy you a cart and bull,
Say, darling, say.

If that cart and bull falls over,
I'm gonna buy you a dog named Rover,
Say, darling, say.

If that dog named Rover don't bark,
Mama's gonna buy you a horse and cart,
Say, darling, say.

If that horse and cart fall down,
You're still the sweetest little baby in town,
Say, darling, say.