

Delyow Sevi

Traditional Cornish

Py le es - owgh hwi ow mos, mow - es fet - tow teg?___ Gans
ag - as penn___ du ha 'gas blew mel - yn.
My ow mos dhe'n fe - n - ten, syr - ra___ hweg,___ Rag
del - yow___ se - vi 'wra___ mow - ys - i teg.

2. Gwra vy mos genowgh hwi, mowes fettow teg?

Gans

Gwra mar mynnowgh hwi, syrra hweg,

Rag

3. Fatla kwrav vy agas gorra hwi yn dor?

Gans

My 'vynn sevel arta, syrra hweg,

Rag

4. Fatla kwrav vy agas dri hwi gans flogh?

Gans

Me 'vynn y dhon, syrra hweg,

Rag

5. Piw a vynna hwi kavas rag sira rag 'gas flogh?

Gans

Hwi 'wra bos y sira, syrra hweg,

Rag

6. Pandra vynna hwi kavos rag lennow rag 'gas flogh?

Gans

Y sira vydh tregher, syrra hweg,

Rag

Standard Written Form of Cornish

Edward Chirgwin's original Spelling

- 1 Pelea era why ow moaz, moes fette teag?
Gen ackas pedden dew h'ackas blew melen.
Moaz than ventan, sarra wheag,
Rag Deliw sevy gwra mowessee tea.

- 2 Ra ve moas gena why, moes fettow teag?
Gen
Grew mena why, sara wheag,
Rag

- 3 Fatla gwra ve ackas gorra why en doar?
Gen
Me veddn sefuall arta sara weage,
Rag

- 4 Fatla gwra ve ackas dry why gen flo?
Gen
Me veddn ye thonne, sarra weage,
Rag

- 5 Pew vedna why gowas rage seera rag flo?
Gen
Why re bose ye seera, sarra weage,
Rag

- 6 Pendre vedd why geal rag lednow rag as flo?
Gen
E sera veath trehar, sarra weage,
Rag

Literal Translation:

- 1 Where are you going to, sweet beautiful maid?
With your dark head and your yellow hair.
Going to the spring sweet sir,
For strawberry leaves make maidens beautiful.

- 2 Shall I go with you sweet beautiful maid?
With
Do as you will, sweet sir,
For

- 3 What will you do if I put on the ground?
With
I will get up again, sweet sir,
For

- 4 What will you do if you get with child?
With
I will bear it, sweet sir,
For

- 5 Who will you find for a father for the child?
With
You have been the father, sweet sir,
For

- 6 What will you do for clothing for the child?
With
You will be the tailor, sweet sir.
For

Note The story of "Delyow Sevi" is a strange one. It is the one complete folk song that has survived in the Cornish language and yet was completely overlooked in Ralph Dunstan's 1929 Cornish Song Book. It was given to the Cornish language scholar, Thomas Tonkin in 1698 by Edward Chirgwin. From Tonkin's notes it was evidently sung to him, but the music was not recorded. The lyrics survive in manuscript form in both Tonkin's manuscripts held by the Royal Institution of Cornwall and the manuscripts of William Gwavas held by the British Museum.

The lyrics were published by William Pryce in his *Archaeologia Cornu-Britannica* in 1790 and also by Edward Jones in his *Musical and Poetical Relicks of the Welsh Bards* in 1794, albeit with some of the more robust verses omitted! The theme is one that is repeated throughout human folklore and belongs to a family of songs of similar ilk. Several such have been collected in Cornwall. One was learned by Rev. Baring Gould from James Olver of Launceston in 1891. This was quickly connected with Edward Jones' lyrics by Rev. Baring Gould and

publisher Harold Boulton who, as Kan Kerniw, set them to Olver's tune in his Songs of the Four Nations published in 1893.

It is understandable that Dunstan may not have come across "Delyow Sevi" in his fairly specialised musical world but both Henry Jenner and Robert Morton Nance would have been familiar with the Tonkin and Gwavas manuscripts. Jenner was even in possession of a copy of Jones' "Kan Kerniw" so had a less suggestive version to use if his sensitivities were offended by the original. Nance did eventually provide a study of "Delyow Sevi" in the Old Cornwall Journal of 1947 but still failed to set the lyrics to music.

It was left to Cornish composer Inglis Gundry to bring "Delyow Sevi" to a wider audience when he published it in his folk song collection Canow Kernow in 1960. Cornish singer Brenda Wootton drew it in to her repertoire of songs in Cornish and included it in her 1975 album "Starry Gazy Pie". It has since found its way into the repertoire of most Cornish folk musicians.

Merv Davey 2016