

SONJA SAVIG

NU TAKK FOR ALT

NORWEGIAN SONGS IN AMERICA



JD 207

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My parents came to the United States on a tramp steamer from Norway in 1926 and settled in Boston where I was born. My mother came from Drammen in Eastern Norway, and she sang songs and read stories and poems to me and my brother every day. My father, from Bergen on the Western coast, also sang and played Norwegian melodies on the mandolin and violin. By the time my mother got around to teaching me English so I could start school, I was already singing most of the songs on this album and many more.

When I was six we moved to Denver where there were few Norwegians. Living way out west in the American Rockies, I grew up in two separate worlds; our family atmosphere of Norwegian music, literature, history, and what were then strange and unusual activities like skiing, hiking, and camping. At the same time there was my American existence, my friends and school experiences. I accepted the contradictions in these two worlds, and the songs I absorbed were a source of personal pleasure and comfort as well as a link to my roots..

Then in 1958 I travelled around Norway living with relatives in various regions and valleys, and studied at the University of Oslo Summer School. I learned more songs and began to understand where the songs of my parents came from and how they fit into the historical, linguistic, and regional picture of Norway.

My mother's and father's education was a product of the period of Norwegian Romantic Nationalism which had its beginnings in the dissolution of the 400-year-old union with Denmark in 1814. The result of this break was a discovery and rebirth of the old Norwegian language (Landsmål or Nynorsk) and the wealth of folk art, music, dance and poetry that lay hidden in the remote and isolated valleys of Norway for hundreds of years. It was a Nationalistic revival and a raging controversy between the advocates of Riksmål ("King's English") of the Daneified cities and the old "country" Norwegian, (complicated by innumerable dialects of each. A well-known joke says that if a Norwegian knows eight languages, seven of them are Norwegian.) It affected every aspect of Norwegian life: politics, art, literature, and education.

So this album contains old medieval ballads, newer folk songs from rural traditions, and written songs by well-known composers or poems set to folk tunes which embraced the sentiment of the period – in both languages and a variety of dialects. It is essentially a statement of my childhood inheritance, the music and culture of my parent's generation which they brought with them to this country and passed on to me.

– Sonja Savig

Per Spelman

Per the Fiddler

The fiddle is the principal folk instrument of Norway. In the eastern section of the country, the standard violin is used; in the western part, they play the Hardanger fiddle (*Hardingfele*). It is slightly smaller than a regular violin, with a flatter bridge and shorter neck, and elaborately carved and inlaid with mother-of-pearl. It has four sympathetic strings under the conventional ones that resonate as the top strings are played, giving this fiddle its distinctive sound.

The fiddler in a Norwegian valley is an important person; he plays for all weddings, dances and gatherings. This well-known folk song is about a fiddler who has traded his fiddle for a cow and he's not very happy about it . . .

Per Spelmann han hadde ei einaste ku. (2)
Han bytte bort kua fekk fela igjen. (2)
“Du gode, gamle fiolin, du fiolin, du fela
mi!”

Per the Fiddler had only one cow. (2)
He traded the cow, got his fiddle back again.(2)
“You good old violin, my violin, my beloved
fiddle!”

Per Spelman han spelte, og fela ho lét, (2)
Så gutana dansa, og jentene gret. (2)
“Du gode, gamle fiolin, du fiolin, du fela
mi!”

Per the Fiddler played, and the fiddle sang, (2)
So the boys danced [wildly] , and the girls
cried [with joy] (2)
“You good old violin, my violin, my beloved
fiddle!”

Og om eg vert gamal søm mose på tre. (2)
Nei aldri eg byter bort fela for fe. (2)
“Du gode, gamle fiolin, du fiolin, du fela
mi!”

Oh, if I grow old as the moss on the tree, (2)
I'll never trade my fiddle for a cow again. (2)
“You good old violin, my violin, my beloved
fiddle!

Nu Takk for Alt (Synnoves Sang)

Now Thanks for Everything

Synнове and Torbjøm grew up on neighboring farms; she at Solbakken (Sunny Hillside) and he at Graneheien (Spruce Ridge). Their story and this poem come from the book, Synnove Solbakken, one of the bondefortellinger (rural life tales), written by Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson in the 1860s. A nationally known writer and journalist, his collection of stories romanticized and popularized the Norwegian farmer and country life. Many poems from these tales were set to music by well-known composers. This melody is by Halfdan Kjerulf.

Nu takk for alt, ifra vi var små
Og lekte sammen i skog og lade.
Jeg tenkte leken den skulde gå
Opp i de grånende dage.

Jeg tenkte leken den skulde gå
Ut fra de løvede, lyse birke
Dit frem hvor Solbakkehuset stå
Og til den rødmalte kirke.

Jeg satt og ventet så mangen kveld
Og så dit bort under graneheien,
Men skygget gjorde det mørke fjell
Og du, du fant ikke veien.

Now thanks for everything from when we
were young
And played together in woods and barns.
I thought the playtime would last
Into the days of old age.

I thought the playtime would continue on.
Out from the leafy, light birches
Up to where the Solbakke houses stood,
And to the red painted church.

I sat and waited so many evenings
While looking over toward Graneheien
But the mountain cast dark shadows
And you, you never found the way

Kari Ru

I learned this song from Ragne Brenno Frydenberg of Valdres (a valley with a rich folk music tradition). She taught me to play the *Langeleik* and told me the folk tales and legends behind the tunes and songs . . .

“There was a dance going on in the valley one Saturday night and at the dance was a girl named Kari Ru. Kari Ru had danced with all of the boys who were there and worn them out, but Kari Ru wanted to keep on dancing. Just then, a stranger came into the hall — no one had seen him in the valley before. He took Kari Ru by the hand and sang this tune, which the fiddler remembered . . .

Hei Karl Ru, eg skal deg snu,
Du skal få dansa metta di du
ViI du meg tru, eg skal deg snu
Så lenga du står på fota dine du
Hei ruri ruri,
Trali rali rali re ari ruri,
Trali rali rali re ari ruri
Trali rali rali re ari ru

Blommete trøye, blommete skjørt,
Og blommete blusa utan på snørt.
Trali rali rali re-i ra-i ru
Trali rali rali re ari ru
Trali rali rali re-i ra-i ru
Trali rali rali re ari ru.

Hei Kari Ru, eg skal deg snu,
Du skal få dansa metta di du
Vil du nieg tru, eg skal deg snu
Så lenga du står på fota dine duo

Hey Kari Ru, I'll dance with you,
You can dance until you've had your fill.
If you'll try me, I'll spin you around.
As long as you can stand on your two feet.
Hei ruri ruri,
Trali rali rali re ari ruri,
Trali rali rali re ari ruri
Trali rali rali re ari ru

Flowered jacket, flowered skirt,
And flowered blouse with lacing.
Trali rali rali re-i ra-i ru
Trali rali rali re ari ru
Trali rali rali re-i ra-i ru
Trali rali rali re ari ru.

Hey Kari Ru, I'll dance with you,
You can dance until you've had your fill.
If you'll try me, I'll spin you around
As long as you can stand on your two feet.

So, Kari Ru and the stranger danced and danced, and finally Kari Ru had had enough. As the stranger left the hall, the people close by saw that he had claws and hooves, and they knew that it was the Devil himself who had to come dance with Kari Ru in order to wear her out.”

Å Ola, Ola, Min Eigen Unge

Oh Ola, Ola, My Dearest One

This folk song comes from Vegårdshei in Aust-Agder in southern Norway, and is part of the *stev* tradition of folk singing. *Stev* poems are improvised verse expressing feelings or opinions on a subject, and sung with any *stev* melody. They were sung in competition (*stevleik*), or as entertainment (*steving*). In M.B. Landstad's 1853 collection there are over 300 *stev* poems and melodies.

Å Ola, Ola, min eigen unge
Kvi la du på meg den sorg so tunge?
Eg tenkte aldri du brydd' deg um
A narra meg søm du sag var ung. (2)

Oh Ola, Ola, my dearest one,
Why did you leave me with this heavy sorrow?
I never thought you would bother
To fool me, you could see I was young. (2)

Og mangei tår på mitt kinn hev runne,
Eg tenkte vetet det hadde sprunge,
Og eg hey gråte so mangei tår
Som der er dagar i tusen år (2)

And many tears have rolled down my cheeks,
I thought my mind would snap.
And I have cried as many tears
As there are days in a thousand years. (2)

Å kjærligheita, ho kan bedrøve,
Gud bære den som far henne prøve.
A kjærligheita, ho er so heit,
Ho virker sårar enn nokon veit. (2)

Oh Love, it can bring you sorrow,
God help the one who has to try it.
Oh Love, it burns so fiercely,
It hurts much worse than anyone knows. (2)

Å Kjøre Vatten

Hauling Water

A folk song about a man who finds a way to combine work and pleasure.

Å kjøre vatten, og kjøre ved,
Og kjøre tømmer over heia!
Å kjøre hvem, søm kjøre vil,
Jeg kjører jenta mi eia!
De røde roser og de øyne blå,
De vakre jenter holder jeg utå,
Helst når jeg får den jeg vil ha,
Da er det morosamt å leva.

Der står et tre i min faders gard,
Det har så underli'e greiner.
Og hvis jeg ikke blir gift i år,
Så vil jeg leva aleine.
De røde roser og de øyne blå,
De vakre jenter holder jeg utå,
Helst når jeg får den jeg vil ha,
Da er det morosamt å leva.

Jeg kjører vatten, jeg kjører ved,
Jeg kjører kjerringa mi eia!
Hu er så god, og hu er så snill,
Jeg kan visst aldri bli lei'a,
De røde roser og de øyne blå,
De vakre jenter holder jeg utå,
Helst når jeg får den jeg vil ha,
Da er det morosamt å leva! (2)

Hauling water, and hauling wood,
And hauling lumber over the hill!
I haul anyone who wants a ride,
I haul my own girl.
The red cheeks and the blue eyes.
I love all the pretty girls;
Especially when I get the one I want,
Then it's great to be alive.

There is a tree in my father's yard,
It has such strange branches;
And if I don't get married this year
Then I'll live alone.
The red cheeks and the blue eyes,
I love all the pretty girls;
Especially when I get the one I want,
Then it's great to be alive.

I haul water, I haul wood,
Now I haul my own wife!
She is so good and so kind,
I can never tire of her.
The red cheeks and the blue eyes,
I love all the pretty girls;
Now I've got the one I want,
Now it's great to be alive. (2)

Ingerid Sletten av Sillejord

Ingerid Sletten from Sillejord

This poem is from Bjøffistjenie Bjøffison's Arne, another bondefortelling (rural life tale). It was set to music by his cousin, Rikhard Nordraak (1842-66), who composed the Norwegian national anthem. The location is Telemark, a region rich in folk tradition.

Ingerid Sletten av Sillejord
Hadde hverken sølv eller gull
Men en liten hue av farvet ull,
Som hun hadde fat utav mor.

Ingerid Sletten from Sillejord
Had neither silver nor gold,
But a little cap of colored wool,
Given to her by her mother.

En liten hue av farvet ull,
Hadde hverken stas eller for,
Men fattig minne om far og mor
Der skinte langt mer' enn gull.

A little cap of colored wool,
A plain little hat without lining,
But a small reminder of father and mother
That shone much brighter than gold.

Hun gjemte huen i tyve år,
Matte ikke slite den ut.
"Så brerer jeg den så glad som brud,
Nar jeg for alterer gar."

She kept the hat for twenty years,
She must not wear it out!
"Then I'll wear it happily as a bride
When I stand before the altar."

Hun gjemte huen i tretti år,
Matte ikke skjemme den ut!
"Så brerer jeg den så glad som brud,
Nar jeg for Varherre står."

She kept the hat for thirty years,
She must not soil it!
"Then I'll wear it gladly as a bride
When I stand before our Lord."

Hun gjemte huen i tretti år,
Husket ennu på sin mor.
"Vesle min hue, for visst jeg tror,
Vi aldri for alteret står."

She kept the cap for forty years,
Still remembering her mother.
"My dear little hat, I do believe
We will never stand before the altar."

Hun ganger til kisten at tage den,
Hjertet var så stort derved,
Hun leter frem til dets gamle sted,
Da var der ikke traden igjen.

She went to the chest to get the cap
Her heart was so full;
She searched to the place where it used to
be,
But not a thread remained.

Kjestaa Hev Eg Pakka

I've Packed My Chest

I learned this song about emigrating to America from my father. His sister sang it as a child in the streets of Bergen in the 1890s; and she taught it to him.

At that time there were many wild stories spread throughout Norway about the wonders of America. It was hard to believe that the streets were paved with gold, or that everyone was rich and paid no taxes, but the rumor most difficult for a Norwegian to believe was that there were hundreds of miles of flat land without rocks! If that was true, anything could be true. Fact and fiction became inseparable and salesmen painted a picture of Utopia in order to sell boat passages to America.

America-fever was a disease that swept Norway and no family was left untouched. On my grandmother's side two brothers emigrated and on my grandfather's side five of seven children left for "Uniten", one a fourteen year old who carried his wooden chest on his back from Kongsberg to Oslo to meet his brother there and take the boat to America!

Kj estaa hev eg pakka, og adle hev eg takka,
No vil eg fare over til Uniten, yes you know.
For kven kan liva heirne, der adle er saa sleirne
Te gjere ablegøi og skrøne vidt og breit.

Sjòlsagt e her fagert, men alt for mykje magert,
Men burt i Amerika der er alt saa gildt og feit.
Der gjeng kvar taus og vinsor langs vegorne moo
prinsor,
Ein sirnpel adelsmann ho knapt vil kasta augo
paa.
Greivor og baroner gjeng der søm lasaroner,
Og dollar prince:>sor heng søm eplar paa ei
grein.
Og gullet ligg i klumpar, for foten saa du
stumpar,
Og slrer deg naseblod paa diamant og edelstein.

Her heime vil dei nekte, ein ungdom pl~nt og
skjekte,
Men over i Uniten er der skjekting, yes you know.
Og ut i Minnesota, der er det plenti guta,
Og hist i Utah veit me at Mormonerane bur.

Yen min spring og fli deg, og skynd deg straks og
bli med.

Kvi vil du traska her naar lukka venter paa deg
der?

Her lyt du gaa i møka, tes du vrert sur og krøka,
Men burt i Amerika er kvar fattig fant en
millionrer!

I've packed my chest and I've thanked everybody
I'm leaving for the United States, (yes you know)
Because who can live here where everybody is so
mean and full of monkey tricks,
And they spread wild stories about you far and wide.

Of course it's beautiful here, but much too meager,
Over in America everything is golden and fat.
Every young flirt saunters down the street with a
prince;
She looks down her nose at anything less!

Lords and barons are as plentiful as bums
and dollar princesses* hang like apples on a tree.
Lumps of gold clutter the streets,
And you get a bloody nose from stumbling over
rubies and diamonds.

Here at home they want to keep the young from
having fun,
But over in America everybody has a good time,
(yes you know)
Out in Minnesota there are plenty of boys [for the
girls I
And, of course, there's always Utah where the
Mormons are living. [for the boys]

Hurry up my friend, get ready, and come with me.
Why plod along here when your fortune's waiting for
you there?

Here you're stuck in the mud till you're old and sour,
But over in America, every poor slob's a millionaire.

*millionaire's daughters

Strikkevise

The Knitting Ballad

This is an old religious folk melody from Norfjord. The words were written by Claus Frimann, an 18th-century pastor and poet. It is a stream of thoughts of a woman knitting; as she knits she relates her knitting to her life.

Saa knytter jeg traad
Saa øyer sig haanden i kvindelig daad
Ved haanden at henge man bliver saa trett
Ved haanden at røre gaar tiden saa lett
Jeg knytter ei silke, jeg knytter ei guld,
Min traad er av uld. (2)

Min uldene traad
naar vinteren bruser, skal varme min fod
Med intet paa stikke, med intet paa teen
Saa mangel maa skjelve paa islagte steen
Gud se til de usle, som nøgne og blaa
I sne-vandet gaar! (2)

Jeg knytter kun traad
Jeg knytter ei baand av ugudelig raad
Vig langt fra mit hjerte du Mørkhedens
aand
Som lærer at binde bestrikkende baand!
Skal mennesket knytte, for menneskets
barn
Et fangende gam? (2)

Min knyttede traad
Mig minder om livet, mit lever en traad,
Hver maskkledd stikke er fuUended dag,
Hver maske, hver knute et pulsaareslag
Naar livet har ende, ø Gud, i din haand
Annam da min aand. (2)

So I knit the thread,
My hand practices the womanly art;
If the hand is idle, one tires easily,
If the hand is active, time passes swiftly.
I do not knit silk, I do not knit gold,
My thread is wool. (2)

My woolen thread
Will warm my feet when winter roars.
With no wool on their needles or spindle
Many people must shiver on the ice-covered
stone,
God take .care of the helpless, naked and blue,
Who must walk in snow-water..(2)

I knit only thread
I knit no bands of ungodly advice
Stay far from my heart, oh Spirit of Darkness,
Who teaches us to tie restricting bonds.
Should mankind knit for their children
A confining net? (2)

My knitted thread
Reminds me of life; my life is a thread,
Each row of stitches is a fulfilled day,
Each stitch, each knot is a life pulse.
When life is over. oh God, into your hand
I deliver my soul. (2)

I Rosenlund

In the Rose Bower

After the defeat of Napoleon in 1812, Norwegians gathered at a place called Eidsvoll to write their constitution which was signed in Sagas Hall (the Hall of History) on May 17th 1814 (Norwegian Independence Day). They proclaimed themselves a free and independent country to the victorious powers of Europe who wanted to use Norway as a political pawn in order to compensate Sweden for her part in the war.

This song commemorates this important event in Norse history. It speaks poetically and symbolically about SftJkvabekk, a mythical stream or spring that runs beneath Sagas Hall, as the source of Norwegian independence and strength.

The poem is by J .S. WeIhaven set to a folk melody that I heard my father play on the mandolin and violin as a child.

I rosenlund under Saga hall,
Der gjemmes hellige minner,
Med sakte rislende bølgefåll
Den klare Søkvaabekk rinner.
Der er en kalk så søt og sval
Av dette vell a tømme,
Og Nordens menn fra !jell og dal
Gar dit i vakne dWmme.

Vi vandrer da til den klare strøm
I sagas fredede rike.
Vart Nordens lyseste fremtidsdwm
Vii der av bøjgene stige.
Ti Odins rett har intet vell,
Der mere liflig kveder,
Enn dette hc'ip for Nordens hell,
Som bor i minnets beger.

In the rose bower under *Sagas Hall*.
Holy memories are hidden.
The clear Søkva-stream runs there
With slow rustling waves.
There is a chalice, sweet and cool
That's replenished from this stream,
And men of the North from mountain and valley
Journey here in their waking dreams.

We wander then to this clear stream
In history's peaceful kingdom
Where the brightest dreams for the future of the
North
Will rise from its waves.
Even all of Odin's kin have no spring
In which there are songs more joyful
Than this hope for Norway's fortune
That lives in memory's chalice.

Pal på Haugen

Paul on the Hill

Many Norwegian folk songs are about animals (*dyrevise*). This one concerns a little boy named Paul who's taking care of the family chickens, and he loses one of them to a fox.

Pål sine hønor på haugen utslepte,
Hønom' so lett yver haugane sprang
Pål kunde vel på hønom fornema,
Reven var ute med rumpa so lang.
Klukk, klukk, klukk, så høna på
haugom, (2)
Pål han sprang og rengde med augom:
"No tor' eg inkje koma heim åt ho mor!"

Pål han gjekk seg litt lenger på haugen,
Fekk han sjå reven låg på høna og gnog,
Pål han tok seg ein stein uti neven,
Dugleg han då til reven slo.
Reven flaug, so rumpa hans rists. (2)
Pål han gret for høna han miste:
"No tor' eg inkje koma heim åt ho mor!"

Inkje kan ho verpa, og inkje kan ho
gala,
Inkje kan ho krypa, og inkje kan ho gå.
Eg frer gå meg åt kverni å mala
Og få tt mjølet eg miste i går.
"Men pytt!" så'n Pål, "eg er inkje
bangen, (2)
Kjeften og modet hey hjelpt no so
mangen,
Eg tor' nok vel koma heim åt ho mor!"

Paul let his chickens out on the hillside,
The chickens ran easily all over the hill.
Paul could tell by the way the chickens were
acting
That the fox was about with his long back end.
Cluck, cluck, cluck, said the chickens on the
hillside (2)
Paul ran and rolled his eyes
"Now I don't dare go home to my mother!"

Paul went a little bit further on the hillside
There he saw the fox gnawing on a chicken.
Paul picked up a rock in his fist
And threw it so hard that the fox ran away.
The fox flew so fast his back end was shaking.
(2)

Paul cried because he'd lost a chicken:
"Now I don't dare go home to my mother."

She can't lay eggs and she can't cackle,
She can't creep and she can't walk.
I'd better go down to the mill and do the
grinding
And make the flour I lost yesterday.
"Oh heck" says Paul, "I'm not worried (2)
A glib tongue and courage have helped so
many
Now I do dare go home and tell my mother!"

Søteste Pike

Sweetest Girl

A short, bittersweet ballad from Valdres and several other districts.

Søteste pike, hør hvad jeg vil såge,
Skjønt jeg i sorgen må fra deg bortgå.
Feileløs ingen i verden du finder,
Der om du aldrig inbilde deg må.
Det kan så være, du ikke vil akte
Hvad jeg nu her vil fremføre for deg.
Det kan du sikkert med tiden betrakte,
Har jeg no løjet, så sig det til meg.

Sweetest girl, listen to what I have to say,
Even though I must leave you in sorrow.
You'll find no one in this world who is
faultless;
Never deceive yourself about that.
It well may be that you won't believe
What I'm telling you now.
But in time you will surely understand,
And if I have lied to you, then tell me so.

En Liten Gut ifra Tistedal'n

A Little Boy from Tiste-valley

This song plays with words that rhyme or have double meanings, creating humor in Norwegian but nonsense in translation.

En liten gut ura Tistedal'n kjørte bora, kjørte
bora.
Den samme da'n for ei gamal kjærring te jora,
ja, det gj or'a.
A da di henne på båra bar
Så gjor'a jamen det, som være var: jamen
gol'a, ja, det gjor'a.

A little boy from Tiste valley drove timber,
drove timber.
The same day they buried an old lady, yes
they did.
And as they carried her on the stretcher,
She did a terrible thing: she howled, yes
she did.

Eg Gjætte Tulla

I Herded Tulla

This folk song from Heddal in Telemark is another *dyrevise* (animal song) about a pet sheep called Tulla. Rural Norwegians have always had a close relationship with animals, so it is not strange that so many folk songs should be about them. I have vivid memories of my mother singing this song to me as a child.

Eg gjætte Tulla i fermten år,
Eg passa vel på ho Tulla.
Eg gjætte burt både lamb og får,
Men endå hadde eg Tulla.
 Å hei, å ha, det fær so gå!
 Eg tregar meste på Tulla
 For ho var krolla i Ulla.

Eg gjætte Tulla burt i ei li,
Der var so lite te beite,
Eg gjekk og lokka på Tulla mi
Og etter graset mon leite.
 Å hei, å ha, det fær so gå!
 Eg tregar meste på Tulla
 For ho var krunga i una.

Og so kom skrubben laskande fram,
Då fekk eg kaupmann te Tulla.
Og akkederinga var 'kje lang,
Og penningan var 'kje mange.
 Å hei, å ha, det fær so gå!
 Eg tregar meste på Tulla
 For ho var krona i ulla.

Eg fekk 'kje meire av Tulla mi
Enn en liten flekk utav blodet.
No kjem eg aldri til Fagerli
Om der er gras nok og grode.
 Å hei, å ha, det fær so gå!
 Eg tregar meste på Tulla
 For ho var krulla i una.

I herded Tulla for fifteen years,
I took good care of Tulla.
I lost both lamb and sheep,
But still I had my Tulla
 O hey, O ho, that's the way it goes!
 I grieve the most for Tulla
 Because her wool was thick and curly.

I herded Tulla on a grassy hill;
There was so little good grazing.
I kept calling for my Tulla
While hunting for good pasture.
 O hey, O ho, that's the way it goes!
 I grieve the most for Tulla
 Because her wool was thick and curly.

And along came the wolf sneaking around
Then I had a buyer for Tulla.
The bargaining didn't take long
And the money wasn't much.
 O hey, O ho, that's the way it goes!
 I grieve the most for Tulla
 Because her wool was thick and curly.

I had nothing left of my Tulla
Except a little drop of blood.
Now I never go back to that lovely hill
Even though there is plenty of grass.
 O hey, O ho, that's the way it goes!
 I grieve the most for Tulla
 Because her wool was thick and curly.

Margit Hjukse

One of the oldest types of Norwegian folk songs is the song-dance from the Middle Ages. These are long unaccompanied ballads where everyone sings in unison while dancing simple steps in circle formation. This type of song-dance has remained in living tradition in the Faroe Islands, but in Norway, only the ballad singing survived. The dance steps were revived in the early 1900s, and the song-dance tradition has been an essential part of organized folk dancing in Norway every since.

“Margit Hjukse” is a *trollvise* or troll ballad, a category of songs dealing with supernatural occurrences and the conflict between Christianity and the Troll world and Pagan beliefs. The texts were often related to real people and events as well as to the superstitions and legends of the region.

Margit Hjukse came from Saudherad (community of Saude) in Eastern Telemark. On her way to church one Sunday, she meets the *bergekonge* (mountain king) who offers her wine to drink which makes her forget her past; (troll kings would blackmail maidens they liked.) She is “mountain taken” (*bergtatt*), which means that she can never be fully human again. She remembers her past when she hears the church bells ringing in the neighboring community of Bø (*Bøherad*), and begs the mountain king to let her go home for a visit.

According to the old woman who sang the song to M. B. Landstad, a well-known collector of ballads and folk music, Margit Hjukse died of sorrow and longing. She wanted to be buried in the Bø churchyard, but the pastor denied her last request because she was troll-taken and therefore not Christian.

I became acquainted with this ballad in 1958 while travelling and studying in Norway. Subsequently, Anund Roheim, a Hardanger fiddler living in Montana, (who comes from the same part of Telemark that “Margit Hjukse” deals with) helped me with the dialect.

A Hjukse den stoltaste gard i Saudherad var,
– Tidi fell meg long'e –
Stolt Margit var dottri uppa den gard,
– Det er eg som ber sorgi so trong'e. –

Oh Hjukse was the proudest farm in Saudherad;
– Time passes so slowly –
Proud Margit was the daughter on that farm,
– It is I who bear this heavy sorrow –

Stolt Margit ho reidde seg til kyrkja a gå,
So tok ho den vegen til fjelli lag.

Proud Margit got ready to go to church,
Then she took the road that went over the
mountain.

Og som ho no kom fram med bergevegg,
Kom bergekongen moo det lange kvite skjegg.

And when she came by the mountain wall,
She met the mountain king with his long white
beard.

So skjenkte han i av den klåraste vin.
“Du take dette hornet og drikk, stolt Margit
mi!

He poured her a goblet of the clearest wine.
“Take this and drink it, proud Margit mine.”

“So var ho i berget åri dei ni,
Og ho fødde søner og døtter trio

She remained in the mountain for nine years,
And she bore three sons and three daughters.

Og Margit ho sat moo sin handtein og spann,
Då hørde ho Bøherads kyrkjeklokkor klang.

Margit was spinning one day,
When she heard the church bells in Bøherad
ringing.

continued next page

Margit Hjukse *continued from previous page*

Stolt Margit ho tala til bergекongen so,
“A ma eg få lov til min fader å gå?”

Og da som ho kom der gangand' i gård,
Hennar sæle fader ute for henne står

“Eg meiner det er Margit, eg had de so kjær,
A kjære mi dotter, å er du no der!”

Han leidde inn stolt Margit moo glede og gråt,
So sette han henne i sin moders stol.

Men da kom bergекongen snøgt som ein eld:
“A kjem du 'kje heim att til borni i kveld.”

Stolt Margit ho sette seg på gangaren grå,
Ho gret fleire tårar enn hesten ha hår.

Ho banka på berget moo fingrane små:
“Statt upp mi eldste dotter, skreid loka ifrå!”

Margit asks the mountain king,
“Oh may I be allowed to go to my father?”

And when she came walking in the yard,
Her beloved father came out to greet her.

“I believe it is Margit whom I loved so dearly,
Oh my dear daughter, are you really here!”

He brought proud Margit in with joy and tears,
And he seated her in her mother's chair.

And then came the mountain king fast as fire:
“Aren't you coming home to the children tonight?”

Proud Margit mounted the gray steed,
She cried more tears than the horse had hairs.

She knocks on the mountain wall with tiny
fingers:
“Get up my oldest daughter and unlock the door!”

Ola Glomstulen

“Ola Glomstuleri” is a *skjemptevis*; a folk song that is satirical, brags, exaggerates or makes fun of something. This one is about a man whose fantasies are greater than his worldly possessions. This “Peer Gynt” men~lity and character exists in many Norwegian folk tales and songs.

Ola Glomstulen hadde ei gamal grå geit. (2)
A kjære mi Karl gjer pølsa bra feit,
For i morgon skat Ola Glomstulen gifta seg.

Oh my dear Kari, make lots of fat sausage!
For tomorrow Ola Glomstulen is getting
married.

Ola Glomstulen hadde ei fingerbjørg malt.
(2)
A kjære mi Karl du bryggjer vel alt,
For i morgon skal Ola Glomstulen gifta seg.

Ola Glomstulen had only a thimbleful of
malt. (2)
Oh my dear Kari, brew the whole thing!
For tomorrow Ola Glomstulen is getting
married.

Ola Glomstulen hadde så lang ei brureferd.
(2)
Ho nåde frå Solum til Graten hjå Blehr,
For i morgon skal Ola Glomstulen gifta seg.
Ola Glomstulen had only one old gray goat.
(2)

Ola Glomstulen had such a long wedding
procession. (2)
It reached all the way from Solum to Graten
at Blehr, *
For tomorrow Ola Glomstulen is getting
married.

* A very short distance

Eg Rodde Meg Ut på Seiegrunnen

I Rowed Out to the Fishing Grounds

This is another comic ballad, (*skjemptevis*) from the vicinity of Bergen.

Eg rodde meg ut på seiegrunnen,
Det var um morgonen tidleg.
Da kom han Olav fra Kåremunnen,
Og lagde båten for ile.
Da dreiv eg tit han moo fiskestongi,
Så'n datt i uvitet bak i rongi.
Eg vart so glad, tok til og kvad,
Eg råde grunnen åleine.
Sudeli, sudeli, sudeli, hei ho!

I rowed out to the fishing grounds,
It was early in the morning.
Then along came Olav from Kåremunnen,
And put his boat to rest there, too.
Then I hit him with my fishing pole
So that he fell unconscious in the back of the
boat.
I was so happy, I started to sing,
I had the fishing grounds all to myself.
Sudeli, sudeli, sudeli hei ho!

Ola Lie

The *Langeleik* (long-play) is a folk instrument dating back to the 1600s, played in the valleys of Valdres and Telemark, and a relative of the Appalachian Dulcimer. It has eight strings (seven drone and one fretted) and is played with a bone pick.

This lullaby is another song I learned from Ragne Brenno Frydenberg, from Valdres. It's to a little boy named Ola Lie and comes from a time a few hundred years back when the houses were one large room with a place for the fire and ashes called the *oska*, a hole in the ceiling for the smoke called the *ljoran*, and a ledge for sleeping called the *hjellen* . . .

Ola Lie, Ola Lie,
Kvår låg du inatt?
Ola Lie, Ola Lie,
Kvår låg du inatt?
Opp i ljoran eg satt,
Ned i oska eg datt,
Opp på hjellen eg spratt,
Og der lag eg inatt.

Ola Lie, Ola Lie,
Where did you sleep last night?
Ola Lie, Ola Lie
Where did you sleep last night?
I was sitting in the *ljoran*,
I fell down in the *oska*,
I jumped up on the *hjellen*,
And that's where I slept last night.

Julekveld

Christmas Eve

My mother's singing was my only source for this song. I knew nothing about its background until recently when I found it in an old school song book and discovered that the poem was written by Jørgen Moe, of fairy tale renown, and the music by Christian Cappelen.

It is full of nostalgia, reminding me of all the Christmas Eves of my childhood, the safety and comfort of family and home, the happiness and excitement, and preparation for Christmas — baking Norwegian Christmas cookies for weeks prior to the big feast, then holding hands, circling the tree and singing Norwegian Christmas songs, and finally opening presents.

Til den gamle, simple stuen
Vil min tanke girne gå.
Ilden spraker høyt på gruen,
Røken stiger lett og blå.
Og det lange furubord
Hvitt er skuret alt av mor,
Gulvet sopet er til festen,
Strødd med brisk for himmel gjesten.

Godt jeg minnes alt som hendte
På den kjære julekveld,
Lysene som faster tente,
Og det blanke kobberstell.
Hjertet barnlig var og blott,
Sang "En frelser er os født,"
Tenkte bak de lune vegger:
"I en stall de Herren legger."

Og var julegrøten ferdig,
Og vi satt om glade bord,
Reiste far seg opp og verdig
Leste høyt om englers kor.
Og jeg syntes at jeg så
Lyse stråler fra det blå,
Og jeg hørte ganske nære
Skarens: "Fred" og "Ære være."

To the old, simple living room
My thoughts lovingly return.
The fire sparkles high on the hearth,
The smoke rises swift and blue.
And the long pine table
Has been scrubbed white by mother;
The floor has been swept for the holiday
And spread with juniper for the heavenly guest.

Well I remember everything that happened
On that beloved Christmas Eve,
All the candles my aunt would light,
And the shining copperware.
My heart was childlike and innocent,
I sang, "unto us a Saviour is born",
And, within the safety of those cozy walls, I
thought:
"In a manger they laid the Christ Child."

And then the Christmas porridge was ready
And we sat around a happy table.
Father rose and with great authority
Read aloud about the angel choir.
And I thought I saw
Lights streaming from the heavens,
And I heard all around me
Angels cry: "Peace on Earth" and "Glory to
God."