

LA MUSIQUE DE LA MAISON: WOMEN & HOME MUSIC IN SOUTH LOUISIANA

Because of the varying sound quality of these recordings, some lyrics are unclear. Questions regarding the accuracy of the lyrics are indicated below.

1. C'EST LA SAINTE MARGUERITE

(IT'S SAINT MARGARET)

ALMA BARTHELEMY

This song tells the story of the martyrdom of a Christian princess whose pagan father intends to torture and kill her because of her faith. The martyred girl is called Saint Catherine in some versions, and Saint Margaret in others. "*Je vais rouler ma fille*" was no doubt derived from "*rouer*," to break someone on the wheel. This song is of French origin and refers in reality to the story of Saint Barbe. In a French Canadian version, called "*Catherine était fille*" ("Catherine Was the Daughter"), she is actually killed in the end. In Ms. Alma's version, the king first tries to break his daughter on the wheel, but the wheel won't turn. Then he asks for his sabre but the sabre won't cut. He then tells her that if she marries, the crown is hers.

C'est la fille Papalon.

Bara boum boum boum boum boum

C'est la fille de Papalon, et la fille du roi.

Hé ha, hé ha.

Et la fille du roi, hé ha, hé ha.

It's the girl from Papalon

Bara boum boum boum boum boum

It's the girl from Papalon, and the king's daughter.

Hey ha, hey ha.

And the king's daughter, hey ha, hey ha.

C'est la Sainte Marguerite.

Bara boum boum boum boum boum

C'est la Sainte Marguerite, et la fille du roi.

Hé ha, hé ha.

Et la fille du roi, hé ha, hé ha.

It's Saint Margaret.

Bara boum boum boum boum boum

It's Saint Margaret, and the king's daughter.

Hey ha, hey ha.

And the king's daughter, hey ha, hey ha.

Que l'on m'apporte ma roue.

Bara boum boum boum boum boum

Que l'on m'apporte ma roue, je vais rouler ma fille.

Hé ha, hé ha. (etc.)

Have them bring me my wheel

Bara boum boum boum boum boum

Have them bring me my wheel, I'm going to turn my daughter.

Hey ha, hey ha.

I'm going to turn my daughter, hey ha, hey ha.

Ma roue ne roule pas.

Bara boum boum boum boum boum

Ma roue ne roule pas, le Carême est fini.

Hé ha, hé ha. (etc.)

My wheel doesn't turn.

Bara boum boum boum boum boum

My wheel doesn't turn, Lent is finished.

Hey ha, hey ha.

Lent' is finished, hey ha, hey ha.

Que l'on m'apporte mon sabre.

Bara boum boum boum boum boum

Que l'on m'apporte mon sabre, je vais tuer ma fille.

Hé ha, hé ha. (etc.)

Have them bring me my saber.

Bara boum boum boum boum boum

Have them bring me my saber, I'm going to kill my daughter.

Hey ha, hey ha.

I'm going to kill my daughter, hey ha, hey ha.

Mon sabre ne coupe pas.

Bara boum boum boum boum boum

Mon sabre ne coupe pas, je vais tuer ma fille.

Hé ha, hé ha. (etc.)

My saber doesn't cut.

Bara boum boum boum boum boum

My saber doesn't cut, I'm going to kill my daughter.

Hey ha, hey ha.

I'm going to kill my daughter, hey ha, hey ha.

Mariez-vous, ma fille.

Bara boum boum boum boum boum

Mariez-vous, ma fille, la couronne est à vous.

Hé ha, hé ha. (etc.)

Get married, my daughter.
Bara boum boum boum boum boum
Get married, my daughter, the crown is yours.
Hey ha, hey ha.
The crown is yours, hey ha, hey ha.

2. VAILLANTE CATHERINE

(VALLIANT CATHERINE)

ALMA BARTHELEMY

This graphic ancient ballad tells of a loyal wife who is falsely accused of infidelity and, along with their child, murdered by her husband. The husband had been tricked by a fellow soldier who claimed to be Catherine's husband but in fact had only made rings identical to hers. When the husband comes home in a rage, he is greeted by his mother and son, but takes the child by his feet and smashes him against a wall. His wife's hair he ties to the pommel of his saddle. After his wife asks why he wants her dead and proves her faithfulness by showing him their rings, he begs her forgiveness. She says for me, yes, but never for the death of our child. The song ends "From the gates of Louise, on the way to those of Paris, on the hills and the thickets, all one sees is the blood of Marianson." Another version of this piece, sometimes called *Les anneaux de Marianson*, was sung for Harry Oster by César Vincent of Abbeville.

*O Catherine, vaillante Catherine,
ayoù il est, votre mari? (bis)*

Oh Catherine, valiant Catherine,
where is your husband? (repeat)

*Mon mari, il n'est pas ici.
Droit à la guerre il est allé. (bis)*

My husband is not here.
Straight to war he went. (repeat)

*O Catherine, vaillante Catherine,
prête-moi les trois anneaux de tes doigts. (bis)*

Oh Catherine, valiant Catherine,
lend me the three rings on your fingers. (repeat)

*O, non, non, Monsieur, vous ne les aurez pas.
Ce sont les anneaux de mon mari. (bis)*

Oh, no, no, Sir, you shall not have them.
These are my husband's rings. (repeat)

*Allez-vous-en chez Monsieur l'Erfut.
Il vous en ferait trois pareils. (bis)*

Go to Mr. L'Erfut's.
He will make you three like them. (repeat)

*O Monsieur l'Erfut faites-moi trois anneaux,
mais ni trop petits et ni trop grands.
O Monsieur l'Erfut faites-moi trois anneaux,
pareils à celles de Marianson.*

Oh, Mr. L'Erfut, make me three rings,
but neither too small nor too large.
Oh, Mr. L'Erfut, make me three rings,
Just like those of Marianson.

*Une fois qu'il a eu les trois anneaux,
droit à la guerre il est allé. (bis)*

As soon as he had the three rings,
straight to the war he went. (repeat)

*O cavalier, franc cavalier,
quelle nouvelle que tu m'apportes? (bis)*

Oh, knight, brave knight,
what news do you bring me? (repeat)

*La nouvelle que je t'apporte
je suis le mari de Marianson. (bis)*

The news that I bring you,
I am Marianson's husband. (repeat)

*O non, non, non, franc cavalier.
Ma femme est trop fidèle à moi. (bis)*

Oh, no, no, no, brave knight,
my wife is too faithful to me. (repeat)

*Il a tombé en haut du cheval,
trois jours, trois nuit il est resté.
Au bout de les trois jours et de les trois nuits,
il est remonté dessus son cheval.*

*Sa mère qui était sur les ramparts,
lui dit, ma fille, voilà votre mari.
Elle dit, ma fille, voilà votre mari,
mais il s'en vient tout enragé.*

*Tenez, ma mère, prenez son enfant,
présentez-lui pour l'apaiser. (bis)*

*Il a pris l'enfant par les pieds blancs,
à la muraille il l'a écrasé.
Il a pris la mère par ses cheveux,
au plumbeau de sa selle il les-t-attachait.*

*O, pourquoi donc, mon cher mari,
que tu veux donc me faire mourir? (bis)*

*Catherine, vaillante Catherine,
où en ce qu'ils sont, les anneaux de vos doigts? (bis)*

*Prenez la clef du cabinet,
et faites trois tours, vous les trouverez.
Il a pas fait les trois tours de clef,
que les anneaux, ils sont retrouvés.*

*O, Catherine, vaillante Catherine,
quel médecin il vous faudrait-il? (bis)*

*Il n'y a ni médecin ni chirurgien,
qui peut remettre mon corps en sain. (bis)*

*Prenez trois planches, clouez-les ensemble,
mettez-moi-z-et mon cher enfant. (bis)*

*O Catherine, vaillante Catherine,
est-ce que tu pardonnerais-t-elle?
O oui, pour moi, je te pardonne,
mais pas pour celle de mon cher enfant. (bis)*

*Depuis la porte de Louise,
pour aller à celle de Paris.
Sur les buttes et les buissons,
l'on voit que le sang de Marianson. (bis)*

He fell from atop his horse,
three days, three nights he remained.
At the end of the three days and the three nights,
he climbed back onto his horse.

Her mother who was on the ramparts
says to her, my daughter, there is your husband.
She says, my daughter, there is your husband,
but he is coming all in a rage.

Here, my mother, take his child,
present it to him to appease him. (repeat)

He took the child by his white feet,
against the wall he crushed him.
He took the mother by her hair,
to the pommel of his saddle he tied her.

Oh, why then, my dear husband,
do you want to see me dead? (repeat)

Catherine, valiant Catherine,
where are the rings from your fingers? (repeat)

Take the key to the closet
and turn it three times, you will find them.
He had not turned the key three times
before the rings were found.

Oh, Catherine, valiant Catherine,
what doctor do you need? (repeat)

There is no doctor nor surgeon
who can bring my body back to health. (repeat)

Take three boards, nail them together,
put me in with my child. (repeat)

Oh, Catherine, valiant Catherine,
would you forgive me this death?
Oh yes, for me, I forgive you,
but not for that of my dear child.

From the gates of Louise,
on the way to those of Paris,
on the hills and the thickets,
all one sees is the blood of Marianson. (repeat)

3. CADET ROUSSELLE

ALMA BARTHELEMY

This is a humorous song using the number three. Cadet Rousselle has only three hairs that he braids when he visits his girlfriend. He wants to marry three girls but the youngest doesn't have a brain ("no light in the attic"). He has three dogs that run away when he calls them. He has three boys: a rogue, a liar, and the one who resembles Cadet Rousselle is a little stringy. Each verse ends with, "But truly, Cadet Rousselle is a good boy!" Folklorist Irene Whitfield cites a version of this song recorded by Alan Lomax, and also recorded a version herself. Harry Oster also recorded a version in Mamou in the early 1960s (on "Folksongs of the Louisiana Acadians," Arhoolie 5009). Other Louisiana versions contain Cajun words like "chaoui," a Choctaw word for raccoon, an animal that did not exist in Europe.

*Cadet Rousselle avait trois cheveux
Deux pour la face, un pour la queue
Quand il allait voir sa belle
Il mettait les trois en tresses
Ha ha ha mais vraiment
Cadet Rousselle est un bon garçon*

Cadet Rousselle had three hairs
Two for the face, one for the tail
When he went to see his pretty one
He put the three in a braid
Ha, ha, ha, but truly
Cadet Rousselle is a good boy.

*O Cadet Rousselle avait trois souliers
Deux qu'il met dans les deux pieds
Et le troisième n'a pas de semelle
C'est pour lui chausser sa belle
Ha, ha, ha, etc.*

Cadet Rousselle had three shoes
Two of which he put on his two feet
And the third one does not have a sole
This is to shoe his pretty one.
Ha, ha, ha, etc.

*O Cadet Rousselle avait trois maisons
Ils n'ont ni lattes et ni chevrons
O la meilleure n'a pas de couverture
C'est pour loger les hirondelles
Ha, ha, ha, etc.*

Cadet Rousselle had three houses.
They have neither slats nor rafters
The best one does not have a roof
This is to house the swallows.
Ha, ha, ha, etc.

*O Cadet Rousselle avait trois jeunes filles
Il veut les mari(li)er les trois
O la plus jeune n'a pas de cervelle
Il manque au grenier sans chandelle.
Ha, ha, ha, etc.*

Cadet Rousselle had three young girls
He wants to marry the three
Oh, the youngest does not have a brain
She has no light in the attic
Ha, ha, ha, etc.

*Cadet Rousselle avait trois habits
Deux de papier jaune, un de papier gris
O quand il met mes cases à l'air
Quand il pleut mais quand il grêle
Ha, ha, ha, etc.*

Cadet Rousselle had three pieces of clothing
Two made of yellow paper and one of grey paper
When he put on ?
When it rains, when it hails.
Ha, ha, ha, etc.

*Cadet Rousselle avait trois bons chiens
Un qui boite goutte qu'en jappant bien
O quand tu les appelles, ça foute le camp
Mais que disez-vous de Cadet Rousselle?
Ha, ha, ha, etc.*

Cadet Rousselle had three good dogs
One which limps while barking well
When you call them, they all run away
What would say of Cadet Rousselle?
Ha, ha, ha, etc.

*Cadet Rousselle avait trois garçons
Un est frippon et l'autre est menteur
Et l'autre il est un peu ficelle
Qui ressemble à Cadet Rousselle
Ha, ha, ha, etc.*

Cadet Rousselle had three boys
One is a rogue, the other is a liar
And the other he's a little stringy
Who resembles Cadet Rousselle
Ha, ha, ha, etc.

continued on next page

*O Cadet Rousselle avait trois deniers
C'est pour payer ses créanciers
O quand il met la main dans la poche
Toutes les aveugles le trouvent drôle
Ha, ha, ha, etc.*

Cadet Rousselle had three pennies
This is to pay his creditors.
Oh, when he puts his hand in his pocket
All of the blind ones find it funny
Ha, ha, ha, etc.

4. QUAND RENAUD REVIENDRA DE GUERRE

(WHEN RENAUD RETURNS FROM WAR)

ALMA BARTHELEMY

This is one of the most ancient songs in nearly every French province, and relates the story of a well-known legendary soldier. Versions are also found in Italy, Spain, Sweden and Finland, all stemming from a common Scandinavian stock.

A woman and her mother-in-law wait for Renaud's return from the war. Renaud's mother knows he's dying but he has told her not to tell his wife. She tries to distract her daughter-in-law by pointing out various trivial things: a lost horse, a new floor, a lost golden dish. The wife complains of things that are distracting her: priests preaching, masons hammering, sisters crying, bells ringing (all things that point to Renaud's unfortunate end). Finally, her mother-in-law tells her that Renaud is dead, even revealing the gory details of how he bravely returned with his liver and his lungs upon the pommel of his saddle. Renaud's widow then requests that a carriage be made; one fit for a king, for her, a woman with no husband.

*Ma mie ma mère, faites-moi mon lit
Mais que ma femme il ne save rien (bis)*

My friend my mother, make my bed
But my wife must know nothing (repeat)

*Que l'on m'apporte un petit peu
Qu'il puisse reconsole son âme à Dieu*

That one carries me a little bit
That he may reconcile his soul to God

O ma mie ma mère que j'attends ici
Qu'est-ce que les prêtres ils font que prêcher (bis)*

O my friend my mother what do I hear there
What the priests do but pray (repeat)

*Alors ma fille il faut que tu sapes
Un beau cheval qui vient s'égarer (bis)*

Alas my daughter you must know
A beautiful horse has gone astray (repeat)

*Mais ce n'est pas pour un cheval ma mère
Qu'il faut maintenant se chagriner*

But it's not for a horse my mother
That we must now lament

*Quand Renaud, Renaud reviendra de guerre
Un beau cheval il amènerait (bis)*

When Renaud, Renaud returns from the war
A beautiful horse he will bring (repeat)

*O ma mie ma mère que j'attends ici
Qu'est-ce que les maçons ils font que cogner (bis)*

O my friend my mother what do I hear there
What do the masons do but hammer (repeat)

*Alors ma fille il faut que tu sapes
Un beau plancher qu'il vient de se bâtir*

Alas my daughter you must know
A beautiful floor that they just built

*Mais ce n'est pas pour un plancher ma mère
Qu'il faut maintenant se chagriner*

But it's not for a floor my mother
That we must now lament

*Quand Renaud, Renaud reviendra de guerre
Un beau plancher il amènerait (bis)*

When Renaud, Renaud returns from the war
A beautiful floor he will bring

*O ma mie ma mère que j'attends ici
Qu'est que les soeurs ils font que pleurer (bis)*

O my friend my mother what do I hear there
What the sisters do but cry (repeat)

continued on next page

*Alors ma fille il faut que tu saches
Un beau plat d'or qui vient de s'égarer*

Alas my daughter you must know
A beautiful platter made of gold has just been lost

*Mais ce n'est pas pour un plat ma mère
Qu'il faut maintenant se chagriner*

But it's not for a platter my mother
That we must now lament

*Quand Renaud, Renaud reviendra de guerre
Un beau plat d'or il amènerait (bis)*

When Renaud, Renaud returns from the war
A beautiful platter made of gold he will bring (repeat)

*O ma mie ma mère que j'attends ici
Qu'est-ce que les cloches ils font que sonner (bis)*

O my friend my mother what do I hear there
What do the bells do but ring (repeat)

*Alors ma fille il faut que tu saches
Ton cher mari Renaud est mort (bis)*

Alas my daughter you must know
Your dear husband Renaud is dead (repeat)

*Deux sur sa selle portent ses foies
Sur son plumbeau apporte ses pommeaux*

Two on his saddle carry his l
On his pommel carry his pommels

*Ma mie ma mère faites moi une carrosse
Que le roi n'a pas de plus beau (bis)*

My friend my mother make a carriage
That the king has none more beautiful (repeat)

*Pour une femme qu'a pas de mari
Était dedans une si belle carrosse (bis)*

For a woman who has no husband
Was in such a beautiful carriage (repeat)

**NOTE: j'attends = j'entends, standard French for "I hear"*

5. MON PETIT PAGE

(MY LITTLE PAGE)

ALMA BARTHELEMY

The lyrics are somewhat unclear in this recording. In the first part of the song, a soldier sends his squire to give news of the war to the king and the soldier's wife. The perspective then changes to the woman asking the Virgin Mary to return her husband home.

*Au revoir mon petit page
Regarde qui brûle c'est ça(?) (bis)*

*Tu diras avant mourrir(sse)
Qu'il a plus de captifs*

*C'est Monsieur de Moncorne
Votre grand plus ennemi(?) (bis)*

*Tu diras-z-à ma femme
Qu'il a plus de mari (bis)*

*O, gentille (?)
Je m'en vais t'en filer(?) (bis)*

*O Vierge, Sainte Vierge
Rendez-moi mon mari (bis)*

*(?) quatorze
Mon nid m'e plaira plus (bis)*

*(?) quatorze
Mon pla (bis)*

*Au revoir mon petit page
Retourne-toi dans Paris (bis)*

6. MALBROUGH S'EN VA-T-EN GUERRE

(MALBROUGH HAS GONE TO WAR)

ALMA BARTHELEMY

This very popular piece is a children's song in France. In this song the *petit page* bears the bad news that Malbrough will not be returning from war. He was expected to return at Easter, but that time has passed. The page says, "The news I bring will make your beautiful eyes cry." He has seen Malbrough put in earth by three officers – one carried his sabre, another his crucifix.

*Malbrough s'en va-t-en guerre
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine
Malbrough s'en va-t-en guerre
Dieu sait quand il reviendra*

Malbrough has gone to war
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine
Malbrough has gone to war
God knows when he will return

Dieu sait quand il reviendra (bis)

God knows when he will return (repeat)

*Il reviendra z'à Pâques
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine
Il reviendra z'à Pâques
Pour la Sainte Trinité*

He will return at Easter
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine
He will return at Easter
For the Saint Trinity

Pour la Sainte Trinité (bis)

For the Saint Trinity (repeat)

*La Trinité se passe
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine
La Trinité se passe
Malbrough ne revient plus*

The Trinity has passed
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine
The Trinity has passed
Malbrough will no longer return

Malbrough ne revient plus (bis)

Malbrough will no longer return (repeat)

*Aperçoit son beau page
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine
Aperçoit son beau page
Tout en noir habillé*

Saw his handsome page
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine
Saw his handsone page
All dressed in black

Tout en noir habillé (bis)

All dressed in black (repeat)

*O page mon petit page
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine
O page mon petit page
Quelles nouvelles tu m'apportes?*

O Page, my little Page
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine
O Page, my little Page
What news do you bring me?

Quelles nouvelles tu m'apportes? (bis)

What news do you bring me? (repeat)

*La nouvelle que je t'apporte
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine
La nouvelle que je t'apporte
Tes beaux yeux vont pleurer*

The news that I bring you
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine
The news that I bring you
Your beautiful eyes will cry

Tes beaux yeux vont pleurer (bis)

Your beautiful eyes will cry (repeat)

*Monsieur Malbrough est mort
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine*

Mr. Malbrough is dead
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine

*Monsieur Malbrough est mort
Est mort et enterré*

Mr. Malbrough is dead
Is dead and buried

Est mort et enterré (bis)

Is dead and buried (repeat)

*Je l'ai vu porter-z-en terre
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine
Je l'ai vu porter-z-en terre
Par trois jeunes officiers*

I saw them put him in the earth
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine
I saw them put him in the earth
By three young officers

Par trois jeunes officiers (bis)

By three young officers (repeat)

*Un qu'a porté le sabre
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine
Un qu'a porté le sabre
Et l'autre le crucifix*

One carried his saber
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine
One carried his saber
The other his crucifix.

7. AU 28ÈME DU MOIS D'AVRIL

(ON THE 28TH OF APRIL)

LORICIA GUILLORY

This is a battle song related to *Malbrough s'en va-t-en guerre* and *Mon petit page*. The lyrics say on the 28th day of April we must go to battle. The war ensues and there are many casualties. Before dying, a soldier is asked about his regrets. He says he only wishes he could see his beautiful lady one last time. She's sent for, and at her beloved's side, she offers to use her ring and belt to heal his wounds. He replies that she can't help him - his wounds are fatal, and he will be in his shroud and buried by tomorrow.

*Au vingt-huitième du mois d'avril
Cher camarades il faut partir.
Il faut partir soldats de guerre
Pour aller nous battre sur ces frontières*

On the 28th of the month of April
Dear comrade, we must leave
We must leave, soldier of war
To go to battle on those frontiers.

*Quand on s'est vu sur ces frontières
On s'est battu six heures de temps
Le commandeur nous demandait
quelles blessures il y avait de faite
Le porteur d'enseigne nous demandait
Quels regrets on avait de mourir.
Le seul regret j'ai de mourir en ce monde
C'est de mourir sans voir ma belle*

When we saw each other on those frontiers
We battled for six hours of time.
The commander asked us
What casualties had been done.
The ensign asked us
What regrets we had from dying
The only regret in this world that I have from dying
It is to die without seeing my beautiful lady.

*Non, non, non, non
Vous mourirez pas car votre belle on l'envoyerait chercher*

No, no no, you will not die for we have
sent for your beautiful lady.

*O par quatre officiers de guerre, tous habillés en militaire
Tant loin-z-la belle les voyait venir
Elle en faisait que soupirait.*

Oh, by four officers of war, all dressed in uniform
From far away, the beautiful lady saw them come.
She could only sigh.

*J'emploierais bague et la ceinture
Qui gueriraient tous tes blessures
Non, non ma belle, emploie rien de toi*

I will use my ring and belt
Which will heal all of your wounds.
No, no my beautiful one, do not use anything of yours

continued on next page

*Car mes blessures ils sont trop profonds
O d'icitte à demain à midi, tu me voirai enseveli
O d'ici après demain à midi, tu me voiras porter-z-en terre
O par quatre officier de guerre, tous habillés en militaire.*

For my wounds they are too deep.
Oh from now to tomorrow at noon,
you will see me in my shroud
Oh from now after tomorrow at noon,
you will see laid in the ground
Oh by four officers of war, all dressed in uniform.

8. PAR DERRIÈRE CHEZ MON PÈRE

(BEHIND MY FATHER'S HOUSE)

ALMA BARTHELEMY

This song, also called *A la claire fontaine*, is without a doubt the best-known folk song in French Canada, often termed its unofficial anthem. It dates back to the first half of the Middle Ages as a dance song, and was also a Holy Grail quest song in certain regions of France. When New France became British, the song took on a symbolic meaning. The refrain then became to French Canadians a way of vowing that they would never forget their homeland, even though they now lived under a different flag.

*Par derrière chez mon père,
en allant nous promener,
J'ai trouvé l'eau si belle
que je me suis baigné.*

Behind my father's house
While we went to take a walk.
I found the water so beautiful
That I bathed myself there.

REFRAIN: *O bé.
Il y a longtemps que je t'aime.
Jamais je t'oublierai.
O bé.
Il y longtemps que je t'aime
Jamais je t'oublierai.*

REFRAIN: Oh, hey
It's a long time since I love you
I will never forget you.
Oh, hey
It's a long time since I love you
I will never forget you.

*J'ai trouvé l'eau si belle
que je me suis baigné.
A la plus haute branche
le rossignol chantait.*

I found the water so beautiful
That I bathed myself there
On the highest branch
The nightingale sang.

REFRAIN

REFRAIN

*Chante rossignol, chante.
Toi qu'as le coeur si gai
Moi, je l'ai-t-à pleurer.
Pour un bouton de roses
Que je l'ai refusé*

Sing nightingale, sing
You whose heart is so gay
While I could weep
for a bouquet of roses
that I refused him.

REFRAIN

REFRAIN

*Pour un bouton de roses
Que je l'ai refusé
Je voudrais que la rose
Fût encore au rosier.*

For a bouquet of roses
that I refused him
I would wish that the rose
Was still on the bush.

REFRAIN

REFRAIN

*Pour un bouton de roses
que je l'ai refusé
Je voudrais que la belle
fût dans mon lit couchée*

REFRAIN

*Je voudrais que la belle
fût dans mon lit couchée
Par un baiser de bouche
que je l'ai réveill[i]ée*

REFRAIN

For a bouquet of roses
that I refused him
I would wish that the beautiful one
Was still lying in my bed.

REFRAIN

I would wish that the beautiful one
Was still lying in my bed.
With a kiss on her lips
I would awaken her.

REFRAIN

9. JE VAIS À LA FONTAINE

PARTY AT LENA GUIDRY'S HOUSE

(see note to "Par derrière chez mon père.")

Ab, ha lala, ha la la (bis)

*Arthur, mon bon ami
Il est parti-z-en bier
Il est parti-z-en guerre
Il est parti-z-en bier*

Pour un bouton de roses.

Ha lala, ha la la (bis)

*Pour un bouton de roses
Que j'avais refusé (bis)*

A la plus haute branche

Ha lala, ha la la (bis)

*A la plus haute branche
Y a un rossignol qui chante (bis)*

Chantez beau rossignol

Ha lala, ha la la (bis)

*Chantez beau rossignol
Vous qu'a le coeur si gai (bis)
Mais moi je suis pas de même*

*Ha lala, ha la la (bis)
Mais moi je suis pas de même
Ma mie viens m'embeter (bis)*

Ah, ha lala, ha la la (repeat)

Arthur my dear friend
He left yesterday
He left for the war
He left yesterday.

For a bouquet of roses

Ha, lala, ha la la (repeat)

For a bouquet of roses
That I had refused (repeat)

The highest branch

Ha, lala, ha la la (repeat)

From the highest branch
There's a nightingale which sings (repeat)

Sing beautiful nightingale

Ha, lala, ha la la (repeat)

Sing beautiful nightingale
You whose heart is so gay (repeat)
But me, I'm not the same.

Ha, lala, ha la la (repeat)
But me, I'm not the same
My friend comes to bother me (repeat)

*Je vas à la fontaine
Ha lala, ha la la (bis)*

I am going to the fountain
Ha, lala, ha la la (repeat)

*Je vas à la fontaine
Pour me laver les mains (bis)*

I am going to the fountain
For to wash my hands (repeat)

Je les essuierai

I will dry them

Ha lala, ha la la (bis)

Ha, lala, ha la la (repeat)

*Je les essuierai
Dessus des feuilles de chêne (bis)*

I will dry them
On oak leaves (repeat)

10. LES FILLES DE VERMILION

(VERMILION GIRLS)

LULA LANDRY

This song expresses the theme of marriageable young girls who fear that they may never find husbands and will become “old maids,” and the lengths to which the Vermilion girls must go in their desperate attempt to find a mate. Lula described the lyrics as saying that the girls wanted to get married, but there were no takers, so they wrote a letter to the priest for him to announce their availability from the altar. As she said, “You can say anything in a song!”

*Au Vermilion, j'étais assuré,
qu'il y a des filles en quantité,
des petites et des grandes.*

In Vermilion, I was assured
that there are girls a-plenty,
little ones and big ones.

*Elles voudrions se marier,
mais personne les demande. (bis)*

They wanted to marry,
but no one asks them. (repeat)

*Les filles ont fait une assemblée,
pour écrire des lettres. (bis)*

The girls got together
to write letters (repeat)

*Pour envoyer à leur curé,
pour lire à la grande messe. (bis)*

To send to their priest
to read at high mass. (repeat)

*A la grand messe ils sont allés,
les garçons, pour prendre le mot d'elles. (bis)*

They (boys) went to high mass
to hear their letters. (repeat)

*Elle vous priont en amitié,
d'avoir pitié des filles. (bis)*

They (girls) beg you in friendship
to have pity on them. (repeat)

11. ALOUETTE

(LARK)

LULA LANDRY

Lula's father's cousin Ulysse Landry taught her this version of *Alouette*, one of several "additive" songs she knew in which each verse adds an item until a long, tongue-twisting, lung capacity-testing list accumulates. This is one French song that is quite familiar to North Americans. There exist a multitude of versions but I have yet to hear a melody that matches Lula's.

*J'ai plumé le bec de mon Alouette.
J'ai plumé le bec de mon Alouette.
J'ai plumé le bec de mon Alouette.
Allons, plumons les donc, plumons les tout du long.*

I have plucked the beak of my lark.
I have plucked the beak of my lark.
I have plucked the beak of my lark.
Let's go, we pluck it thusly, we pluck it from head to toe.

*J'ai plumé la tête de mon Alouette. (bis)
J'ai plumé la tête et le bec de mon Alouette.
Allons, plumons le donc, plumons les tout du long.*

I have plucked the head of my lark. (repeat)
I have plucked the head and the beak of my lark.
Let's go, we pluck it thusly, we pluck it from head to toe.

*J'ai plumé le cou de mon Alouette. (bis)
J'ai plumé le cou, la tête et le bec de mon Alouette.
Allons, (etc.)*

I have plucked the neck of my lark. (repeat)
I have plucked the neck, the head and the beak of my lark.
Let's go, (etc.)

*J'ai plumé le dos de mon Alouette. (bis)
J'ai plumé le dos, le cou, la tête et le bec de mon Alouette.
Allons, (etc.)*

I have plucked the back of my lark. (repeat)
I have plucked the back, the neck, the head and the beak of my lark.
Let's go, (etc.)

*remainder of verses = le ventre, une aile, l'autre aile, une
cuisse, l'autre cuisse, une patte, l'autre patte, and la queue.*

remainder of verses = the belly, a wing, the other wing, a thigh,
the other thigh, a foot, the other foot, and the tail.

12. LA FLEUR DE LA JEUNESSE

(THE FLOWER OF YOUTH)

LULA LANDRY

This is one of Lula's most beautiful ballads, which was sung by the bride at one of her uncle's weddings as a promenade at the post-wedding dance. She felt it was her most popular song: "It brought me everywhere I went. On account of that song, I went to Washington D. C. Someone had heard it at a festival here and invited me there." The bittersweet, melancholy tone it evokes is common in Cajun and Creole wedding songs expressing the bride's point of view. A woman on her wedding day claims that she wants to say the vows, but still yearns for the carefree days of youth, in her mind a more noble time before she was forced to take on this burden. This promenade is still used for weddings in France, and versions are known in the Maritime Provinces of Canada, all with the same sad and nostalgic view of impending marriage.

*J'avais promis dans ma jeunesse,
que je m'aurais jamais marié.
J'avais promis dans ma jeunesse,
que je m'aurais jamais marié.*

I had promised in my youth
That I would never marry.
I had promised in my youth
That I would never marry.

*REFRAIN: Adieu, la fleur de la jeunesse,
la noble qualité de vie,
la noble qualité de vie,
c'est aujourd'hui que je veux la quitter.*

REFRAIN: Good-bye, flower of youth,
The noble quality of life,
The noble quality of life,
It's today that I want to leave it.

continued on next page

*C'est aujourd'hui que ma tête est couronnée,
et que mon coeur est orné d'un bouquet. (bis)*

REFRAIN

*C'est aujourd'hui que je porte le nom de dame.
C'est par l'anneau que je porte au doigt. (bis)*

REFRAIN

*C'est aujourd'hui que je veux faire le serment.
C'est de finir mes jours avec toi. (bis)*

REFRAIN

It's today that my head is crowned
and my heart is ornamented with a bouquet. (repeat)

REFRAIN

It's today that I carry the name of a married woman.
It's by the ring that I wear on my finger. (repeat)

REFRAIN

It's today that I want to take the vow.
It's to finish my days with you. (repeat)

REFRAIN

13. QUEL PETIT HOMME

(WHAT A LITTLE MAN)

LULA LANDRY

This is one for those men concerned with “size” and all its implications, and also a comic and cathartic rebellion for woman against marital domination. This is probably the oldest song on this compilation, dating back a thousand years to the French Middle Ages, and is one of the most widespread French traditional songs in Canada. Lula explained the lyrics: “The girl, her father gave her a little husband. He was very small - very, very small. And she lost him in her straw mattress. To find him she lit a candle and the mattress took fire. He burnt in that fire, and when she found him he was all burnt up and the cats thought he was a mouse!”

*Mon papa m'a donné-s-un petit mari,
Grand Dieu, quel homme, quel petit homme! (bis)*

*Je l'ai perdu dans la pailleasse.
Grand Dieu, quel homme, quel petit homme! (bis)*

*J'ai allumé la chandelle pour le chercher.
Grand Dieu, quel homme, quel petit homme! (bis)*

*Le feu a pris dans la pailleasse.
Grand Dieu, quel homme, quel petit homme! (bis)*

*Je l'ai trouvé-s-et tout rôti.
Grand Dieu, quel homme, quel petit homme! (bis)*

*Je l'ai-s-enseveli dans une soucoupe.
Grand Dieu, quel homme, quel petit homme! (bis)*

*Les chats l'ont pris pour un souris.
Grand Dieu, que homme, quel petit homme! (bis)*

*(exclaimed) J'ai dit, "O, chats! O, chats! C'est mon mari!"
(sung) Grand Dieu, quel homme, quel petit homme!
(exclaimed) "O, chats! O, chats! C'est mon mari!"
(sung) Grand Dieu, quel homme, quel petit homme!*

My father gave to me a little husband,
Good God, what a man, what a little man! (repeat)

I lost him in the straw mattress,
Good God, what a man, what a little man! (repeat)

I lit the candle to look for him,
Good God, what a man, what a little man! (repeat)

The mattress caught fire,
Good God, what a man, what a little man! (repeat)

I found him all burnt,
Good God, what a man, what a little man! (repeat)

I shrouded him in a saucer,
Good God, what a man, what a little man! (repeat)

The cats took him for a mouse,
Good God, what a man, what a little man! (repeat)

*(exclaimed) I said, "Oh, cats! Oh, cats! That's my husband!"
(sung) Good God, what a man, what a little man!
(exclaimed) "Oh, cats! Oh, cats! That's my husband!"
(sung) Good God, what a man, what a little man!*

14. A BOIRE, À BOIRE

(DRINK, DRINK)

LULA LANDRY

This is a *bombauche* or drinking song. This march states that one must pay homage to the earth for she nourishes all: women, children, men, fools, drunks or wise. The song ends by saying that the Acadians are not so foolish as to say goodbye without a drink.

*La terre nourrit tous,
la terre nourrit tous,
les fous, les sôûls, les sages.
La terre nourrit tous,
la terre nourrit tous,
la femme et les enfants.*

The earth nourishes everyone,
The earth nourishes everyone,
The crazies, the drunks, the wise.
The earth nourishes everyone,
The earth nourishes everyone,
The woman and the children.

*A boire, à boire, à boire ce qu'il nous faut.
En voilà la vie, la vie, la vie.
En voilà la vie que nous demandons.*

Drink, drink, drink it's what we need.
Here is the life, the life, the life.
Here is the life that we ask.

*Si c'est ça la vie que nous demandons,
nous devons la suivre comme de vaillants enfants.*

If this is it, the life that we ask,
We must follow it like honorable children.

*Les Acadiens sont pas si fous,
de se laisser sans boire un coup.
A boire, à boire, à boire ce qu'il nous faut!*

The Acadians are not so crazy,
To let themselves without drinking a drop.
Drink, drink, drink it's what we need!

15. 'TITE POULE GRISE

(LITTLE GRAY HEN)

LULA LANDRY

This piece, one of the best-known French language lullabies, is sung throughout French Canada and South Louisiana. Later in life, Ms. Lula sang the last line as “*pour mon bébé faire do do*” (for my baby to go to sleep), but in this version she sings “*pour bébé manger*” (for baby to eat). In France, ‘coco’ is sometimes translated as ‘egg’ in baby language. She described this piece as a lullaby, but gives such a percussive performance, I’m not sure if she really wanted that baby to *fais-do-do*.

*C'est la 'tite poule grise,
qui pond dans l'église.
Ca ti co co pour bébé manger.
Ca ti co co pour bébé manger.*

It's the little gray hen
who lays (eggs) in the church.
Ca ti co co for baby to eat.
Ca ti co co for baby to eat.

*C'est la 'tite poule noire,
qui pond dans l'armoire.
Ca ti co co pour bébé manger.
Ca ti co co pour bébé manger.*

It's the little black hen
who lays in the armoire.
Ca ti co co for baby to eat.
Ca ti co co for baby to eat.

*C'est la 'tite poule jaune,
qui pond dans les joncs.
Ca ti co co...*

It's the little yellow hen
who lays in the rushes.
Ca ti co co...

*C'est la 'tite poule blanche,
qui pond sur les planches.
Ca ti co co...*

It's the little white hen
who lays in the rushes.
Ca ti co co...

continued on next page

*C'est la 'tite poule rouge,
qui pond dans la rue.
Ca ti co co....*

It's the little red hen
who lays in the street.
Ca ti co co...

16. ISABEAU

LULA LANDRY

This piece originated from an ancient French song *La Pernelle*, a religious complaint. Lula considered this to be one of the jewels of her repertoire. She learned it at a wedding reception she attended at age 14, by eavesdropped on four men sitting around a table sipping wine and singing. The lyrics say that Isabeau was walking in her garden on the shore when she met 30 sailors. The youngest of the sailors started to sing. Isabeau wants to know the name of the song. He invites her onto the ship, saying he will sing it to her. After boarding the ship, she starts to cry because her gold ring has fallen into the water. He offers to dive in and fetch it. On the first dive, he retrieves nothing, on the second, the ring flies out of the water, and on the third, the gallant sailor drowns. One Canadian version is a dance song called *Isabeau s'y promène* that contains similar lyrics yet does not have such a dire ending as Lula's: Isabeau weeps because the sailor has won her heart rather than drowned.

*Isabeau se promenait le long de son jardin.
Le long de son jardin sur le bord de l'île,
le long de son jardin sur le bord de l'eau,
sur le bord du vaisseau.*

Isabeau walked along her garden.
Along her garden on the shore of the island,
along her garden on the edge of the water,
on the side of the vessel.

*Elle fit la rencontre de trente matelots.
De trente matelots sur le bord de l'île,
de trente matelots sur le bord de l'eau,
sur le bord du vaisseau.*

She met thirty sailors.
Thirty sailors on the shore of the island,
thirty sailors on the edge of the water,
on the side of the vessel.

*Le plus jeune des trente, il s'est mis-t-à chater.
Il s'est mis-t-à chanter (etc.)*

The youngest of the thirty, he started to sing.
He started to sing (etc.)

*La chanson que tu chantes, je voudrais la savoir.
Je voudrais la savoir (etc.)*

The song that you sing, I would like to know it.
I would like to know it (etc.)

*Embarque dans ma barque, je te la chanterai.
Je te la chanterai (etc.)*

Come onto my ship, I will sing it to you.
I will sing it to you (etc.)

*Quand elle fut dans la barque, elle s'est mis-t-à pleurer.
Elle s'est mis-t-à pleurer (etc.)*

When she was on the ship, she started to cry.
She started to cry (etc.)

*Qu'avez-vous donc, la belle? Qu'avez-vous à pleurer?
Qu'avez-vous à pleurer (etc.)*

What's wrong, lady? What's wrong that you're crying?
What's wrong that you're crying (etc.)

*Je pleure mon anneau d'or, dans l'eau il est tombé.
Dans l'eau il est tombé (etc.)*

I cry for my gold ring, in the water it's fallen.
In the water it's fallen (etc.)

*Ne pleurez point, la belle. Je vous la plongerai.
Je vous la plongerai (etc.)*

Don't cry, lady. I will dive in to get it for you.
I will dive in (etc.)

*De la première plonge, il n'est rien rapporté.
Il n'est rien rapporté (etc.)*

In the first dive, he brought back nothing.
He brought back nothing (etc.)

*De la deuxième plonge, l'anneau a voltigé.
L'anneau a voltigé (etc.)
De la troisième plonge, le galant s'est noyé.
Le galant s'est noyé (etc.)*

In the second dive, the ring flew out of the water.
The ring flew (etc.)
In the third dive, the gallant man drowned.
The gallant man drowned (etc.)

17. JEAN GRAND GALET

MRS. ONEDIUS MORVANT

Whitfield cites the composer of the song as Judge Félix Voorhies, a playwright from St. Martinville, and states, "Judge Voorhies used this song with others of his own composition in comedies which he wrote and had presented in St. Martinville in about 1894." It was recorded in the 1950s by Cajun comedian Marion Marcotte. This is a humorous story about a wedding dinner with "pig's feet, pig's ears, the head of the pig, pork roast, pork meatballs, pork chops... Well, to sum up, this was a true big pig affair!" (*Cochonnerie* is normally translated as "stupid things, dirty things," and in relation to food, "revolting food, pigwash.")

*REFRAIN: C'est moi, Jean Grand Galet
Le fils à Nonc Pierre
L'homme à Tonton qui restait dans les bois*

*Je suis sur un grand voyage
pour la première fois
J'oserai dire que
C'est pas la dernière
Ah oui, c'était beau.
C'était tout de nouveaux parages.*

Enfin mes amis. Nous avons été à St Martinville. Ah mais ça c'était une belle ville. C'étaient toutes des maisons peinturées blanches avec les portes vertes. Nous avons vu un homme sur le coin d'une rue avec un paquet sous les bras qui étaient quasiment pointu d'un bout et carré de l'autre que nous avons devenus comprendre que c'était un docteur qui avait été retiré un malade. Ce docteur-là nous avait amené dîner chez lui. O, mais ça c'était un bon dîner. C'était un dîner de noces. Joséphine se marie!

REFRAIN

Ce dîner-là, c'était..., o, c'était un bon dîner. C'était un dîner de noces. Il y avait des pattes de cochon, des oreilles de cochon, de la tête de cochon, du rôti de cochon, des boulettes de cochon, des côtes de cochon. Hein, pour en finir, c'était une vraie grande cochonnerie!

REFRAIN

Ce docteur-là nous avait amené à un cirque. Oh, mais ça c'était un beau cirque. Il y avait toutes sortes de choses. Il y avait un chameau il devrait être fier avec la bosse sur le dos. Il y avait un macaque. Ce macaque, il l'a tiré. Que vous croyez nous avons vu tomber? Un chaoui!

REFRAIN

*REFRAIN: It is I, Jean Grand Galet
The son of Uncle Pierre
Tonton's husband who lived in the woods.*

*I took a big trip for the first time
I will dare to say that it will not be the last.
Oh, it was beautiful. It was all new regions.*

Well, my friends. We went to St. Martinville. Ah, that was a pretty city. All of the houses were painted white with green doors. We saw a man on the corner of a street who had a packet under his arm. The packet was practically pointed on one end and squared on the other. We came to understand that this was a doctor who had pulled back a sick person. That doctor brought us to dine at his home. Oh, but that was a good dinner. It was a wedding dinner. Joséphine is getting married!

REFRAIN

That dinner, that was..., oh that was a good dinner. It was a wedding dinner. There were pig's feet, pig's ears, the head of the pig, pork roast, pork meatballs, pork chops... Well, to sum up, this was a true big pig affair! (Note: *cochonnerie* = normally, "stupid things, dirty things," and in relation to food, "revolting food, pigwash.")

REFRAIN

That doctor brought us to a circus. Oh, but this was a beautiful circus. There were all sorts of things there. There was a camel which must have been proud with the hump on its back. There was a monkey. This monkey, he pulled it. What do you think we saw fall out? A raccoon!

REFRAIN

18. LE SOIR EN SE COUCHANT

(AT NIGHT WHILE SLEEPING)

INEZ CATALON

This song, also called *La Maumariée* (The Ill-Wed Wife), was popular as early as the 15th century, one of numerous songs of unhappy wives. This is the kind of song, usually cataloging the hardships of married life, that was sung back when it was the custom for the community to serenade newlyweds outside the bridal chamber. In Canada this song was used to accompany work or dancing. Inez's mother taught her this song about an old poor farmer wanting to marry off his daughter to a rich man. Inez said, "You can give me all the money you want, but if you don't love me that way, I can't serve you as a wife. So it proves to a person that money is not everything. You can have gold and riches and still be unhappy. You're buying me out -- I'm not for sale!" The lyrics say: One night, while sleeping, the husband turns his back (so to speak) on the wife. The next day, she goes straight to her father's house. Her father recommends that she be patient - her husband is an old rich merchant. She exclaims, "To hell with riches when there is no pleasure there!"

*Le soir en se couchant
il m'a tourné le dos (bis)*

At night while sleeping
He turned his back to me (repeat)

*Le lendemain matin
droite c'est mon père je veux (bis)**

The next morning
back to my father's house I go (repeat)

*Ma fille, prend donc courage
c'est un vieux riche marchand (bis)*

My daughter, take courage
it is an old rich peddler (repeat)

*Au diable la richesse
quand le plaisir n'est pas! (bis)*

To the devil with riches
when pleasure isn't there. (repeat)

*Although Inez clearly sings "*c'est*" and "*veux*" in verse 2, when she explains the lyrics, she actually translates them as if they were "*droite chez mon père je va's*" ("back to my father's house I go.")

19. PAR UN SAMEDI AU SOIR

(ON A SATURDAY NIGHT)

INEZ CATALON

Inez says this piece is the classic tale "about the father of a girl against this fellow being in love with his daughter." A couple is sitting up late on a Saturday evening when the father arrives, extremely angry. He tells his daughter to go to bed. The couple tearfully parts. The man states that he's leaving for a trip, and that he'll return to marry her the moment her father dies.

*Par un samedi au soir
nous était en retard veillé.
La chandelle est allumé dessus la table.
Le père est arrivé
D'un air et farouché
Il lui commande sa fille d'aller se coucher.*

On a Saturday night
we were sitting up late.
The candle was lit on the table.
The father arrived
Extremely upset.
He orders his daughter to go to bed.

*Adieu donc la belle, oui,
adieu donc la chère, oui,
si nos coeurs se laissent
se repart pour toujours.
Je t'aime et je t'adore
et je crois que tu m'aimes toi aussi.*

Goodbye my lovely, yes,
Goodbye my dear, yes,
if our hearts leave each other
part forever.
I love you and I adore you
and I believe you love me too.

continued on next page

*Dans ta cruelle main
que nous en oppose nos amours.
Je pars pour un voyage
et quand je reviendra
aussitôt ton père est mort je t'épouserai.*

(repeat from "Adieu donc...")

In your cruel hand
that they oppose our love.
I'm leaving on a trip
and when I return
as soon as you father is dead I will marry you.

20. JE SUIS UN HOMME D'UNE GRANDE FAMILLE

(I AM A MAN FROM A BIG FAMILY)

INEZ CATALON

This song, also found in France and Canada, is a delightful and dramatic conversation between a boy and his potential future mother-in-law. Inez described the song's lyrics: "I am a man of a large family. I've come to you, an old lady, to ask for your daughter in marriage. I think she's as beautiful as a heart. Accept me as your son-in-law; I have come to give her an honor. The mother says, 'My daughter is no good, she's a mystery, naive, sneaky. The girl breaks plates, and the pieces are of no value. Take me, I'm handy, I'll be your right hand. You'll do better with me.' The boy answers, 'Your head is all gray and you haven't got but one tooth in your head, so therefore my love is for your daughter. There is nothing for you!'" The following song *Elle est malade* also has references to a single tooth and marriage to elderly ladies.

*Je suis un homme d'une grande famille
Madame, je suis venu vous trouver
Je suis venu vous demander votre fille
Oh, si vous voulez me la donner
Ah que je l'aime d'amour aussi tendre
Et je trouve jolie comme un coeur
Acceptez-moi pour votre gendre
Je suis venu y faire son bonheur.*

*Ah, mon ami, ma fille est maline
j'aimerais pas que vous l'attraperez
Elle me casse mes plats ma vaisselle
Que des morceaux non pas de valeur
Voilà c'est moi la plus à droite, oui
Prenez-moi pour faites pour le mieux.*

*Voilà vot' tête qui vous grisonne
Vous n'avez pas plus qu'un dent!
Mon amitié c'est pour votre fille, oui
Bonne vielle femme à rien que pour vous*

I am a man from a big family
Madam, I have come to find you
I have come to ask you for daughter
Oh, if you want to give her to me
Oh, how I love her so tenderly
And I find her as beautiful as a heart
Accept me as your son-in-law
I have come to bring her happiness.

Ah, my friend, my daughter is mean
I would not like it that you get her
She breaks my plates and my dishes
Into only pieces with no value
Here, it's me that is more handy
Take me, I'm the better one.

Behold your head which makes you all gray
You have but one tooth!
My love is for your daughter, yes
My good old woman, there's nothing for you.

21. ELLE EST MALADE

(SHE IS ILL)

ODILE FALCON

This song is also known in France as *La ronde de la vieille* ("The Old Crone's Dance"), and also shares references with *Je suis un homme d'une grande famille*. A woman is on her deathbed. She had only two teeth - one which moved when the wind blew, the other that constantly made the noise "ta ling ga lang." Someone calls for the doctor, but when he arrives, the old woman is already dead and buried. The husband says that with the inheritance of the old lady, he'll find another wife a hundred times more beautiful and also quite young.

*Il y avait Calais qui venait qui me disait
la belle elle est malade.
(bis)*

There was Calais, who came to tell me,
The pretty one, she is ill.
(repeat)

*Elle est couchée dessus son lit de malade
en danger de la mort.
La pauvre vieille, elle avait que deux dents
Un qu'allait ô quand il faisait vent
et l'autre faisait tout le temps
ta ling ga lang*

She is abed, on her sick bed
In danger of death
The poor old woman, she only had two teeth
One which went when the wind blew.
and the other which went all of the time
Ta ling ga lang.

*Envoyez chercher le docteur
Docteur arrive, elle est morte et enterrée.
Avec la bourse de la vieille
Envian Brandon la vieille
Je me trouverai une autre cent fois plus belle
Cent fois plus belle que la vieille Envian Brandon.*

Send someone to find the doctor
The doctor arrives. She is dead and buried.
With the purse of the old lady
the old lady Envian Brandon
I will find another, one hundred times more beautiful
Ohe hundred times more beautiful than the old lady Envian
Brandon.

*A qu'il fait beau
c'est deux mariés des vieilles
que des jeunes de treize ou quatorze ans.*

Oh, it's lovely, these two married one of old women
Rather than the young ones of thirteen or fourteen years old.

22. AU PONT DE NANTES

(ON THE BRIDGE OF NANTES)

ODILE FALCON

This is a well-known French folksong about a bridge in one of the principal cities of Brittany. Inez Catalan also sang a version, but omitted the first line reference to the bridge and began hers with the second line, *'Bonjour, Hélène...'* This song dates back to the Middle Ages, and presents the *danseuse noyée*, "the drowned dancing girl," an image that was very popular in South Louisiana, no doubt due to the somber moral of its story. Hélène, who defies her mother's authority and goes to a dance on the Nantes Bridge, is drowned when the bridge collapses. Such is the fate of disobedient girls, concludes the song. Hélène's mother, on learning of her daughter's death, merely comments, "My daughter Hélène disobeyed me."

*Au pont de Nantes,
gros bal fut annoncé. (bis)*

On the Bridge of Nantes
a big dance was announced. (repeat)

*Hélène demande
à sa mère pour aller. (bis)*

Hélène asks
her mother to be allowed to go. (repeat)

*O non, ma fille,
tu n'irais pas au bal. (bis)*

Oh no, my daughter,
you won't go to the dance. (repeat)

continued on next page

*J'ai fait un rêve
que vous étiez noyé. (bis)*

I had a dream
that you were drowned. (repeat)

*Votre frère arrive
dans un joli bateau. (bis)*

You brother is arriving
in a pretty boat. (repeat)

*Comment, ma soeur,
tu n'allais pas au bal? (bis)*

What's this, my sister,
you didn't go to the dance? (repeat)

*O oui, mon frère,
Je suis-t-à m'habiller. (bis)*

Oh yes, my brother,
I am getting dressed. (repeat)

*Hélène arrive.
Elle se met tout à danser. (bis)*

Hélène embarks
on the pretty boat. (repeat)

*Le pont de Nantes
se trouve à défoncer. (bis)*

Hélène arrives.
She begins to dance. (repeat)

*Hélène tombe.
Elle se laissa noyer. (bis)*

The bridge of Nantes
starts to cave in. (repeat)

*Les cloches de Nantes
se met toutes à sonner. (bis)*

Hélène falls.
She let herself drown. (repeat)

*Sa mère demande,
pourquoi que les cloches sonnent-elles? (bis)*

The bells of Nantes
all begin to ring. (repeat)

*Votre fille Hélène
elle s'a laissé noyé. (bis)*

Her mother asks,
why are the bells ringing? (repeat)

*Ma fille Hélène,
elle m'a désobéi. (bis)*

Your daughter Hélène,
she let herself drown. (repeat)

My daughter Hélène,
she disobeyed me. (repeat)

23. GOODBYE, MA CHÈRE AMIE

(GOODBYE, MY DEAR FRIEND)

MARIE LANGE

This song is similar to many of European origin that move back and forth between the perspective of two people, one making suggestions, the other refusing. The lyrics in this recording are spotty, but basically say: I've come to say goodbye, my dear lady friend, though I'm sure today is not the day of your death. Give your horse some hay to eat. My horse is not hungry, he's eaten stacks of hay, and my feet are in the stirrups.

*Goodbye ma chère amie
Je s'us venu te dire adieu
Je s'us sur aujourd'hui(?)
C'est pas la mort de toi(?)
Bis*

*Dieu sait que ton cheval
Aimait les autres gars(?)
Donne-lui du foin à manger
A soir de faire de moi(?)*

*Dieu sait que ton cheval
Donne-lui du foin à manger
Donne-lui du foin à manger
A soir de faire de moi(?)*

*Mon cheval il a pas faim
Il mange une boîte(?) à foin
Je fais d'à partir (?)
Je (?) son cou*

*Mon cheval il a pas faim
Il mange une boîte(?) à foin
Je fais d'à partir (?)
J'ai les pieds dans l'estrieur*

I've come to say goodbye
I'm sure that today(?)
Is not the death of you(?)
Bis

God knows that your horse
(?)
Give him some hay to eat
(?)

God know that your horse
Give him some hay to eat
Give him some hay to eat
(?)

My horse is not hungry
He eats a stack(?) of hay
(?)
(?)

My horse is not hungry
He eats a stack(?) of hay
(?)
My feet are in the stirrups

24. MOI JE L'AIME UNE PETIT FILLE

(I LOVE A LITTLE GIRL)

MARIE LANGE

*Moi, je l'aime une petite fille,
et je l'aime de toute ma vie.
j'y donne la mon même coeur
pour la faire être ma femme, O, O,
pour la faire être ma femme, O, O.*

*Une fois j'étais chez elle,
elle m'a prise par la main,
sur la parole elle m'a donné
me surviens plus jamais, O, O,
me surviens plus jamais, O, O.*

*Une semaine ou deux après
elle m'a renvoyé une lettre,
sur cette-là elle me disait
me sur(re)viens encore, O, O,
me sur(re)viens encore, O, O.*

*Moi, j'ai renvoyé une note
sur cette-là, moi, j'ai dit
que j'avais pas oublié la fois
qu'elle m'a mis à la porte, O, O,
qu'elle m'a mis à la porte, O, O.*

*Jeune gens de mari(li)er,
brun ou blond ou quoi ce que c'est,
laissez pas le votre traiter vous
comme la mienne m'a traité, moi, O, O,
comme la mienne m'a traité, moi, O, O.*

Me, I love a little girl
and I love her all my life
I even give her my heart
to make her become my wife, Oh, Oh,
to make her become my wife, Oh, Oh.

Once, I was at her house
She took me by the hand
On the word that she gave me
I'll never come back again, Oh, Oh,
I'll never come back again, Oh, Oh.

A week or two later
She sent a letter to me
In which she said
I should come back again, Oh, Oh,
I should come back again, Oh, Oh.

Me, I sent a note
In which, me, I said
That I had not forgotten the time
That she kicked me out the door, Oh, Oh,
That she kicked me out the door, Oh, Oh.

Young men about to be married,
Brunette or blond or whatever they may be
Do not let yours treat you
Like mine treated me, Oh, Oh,
Like mine treated me, Oh, Oh.

25. Y A TROIS PETITS TAMBOURS

(THERE ARE THREE LITTLE DRUMMERS)

MABEL TOUCHET

This song is found in Brittany and other parts of France, one of many with the theme of the departure and return of a soldier. Three drummers return from war and one asks Madame Lersé for the hand of her daughter. She refuses, saying he's a bit too poor, but then asks the identity of his father. When he answers that his father is the king of England, she changes her mind and says he can have her daughter. He say no thanks, over in my country I have my choice of rich ones and poor ones, pretty ones and ugly ones.

*Y a trois petits tambours
O qui s'en viennent de guerre. (bis)
Vri, vra, vri, vra, vra,
O qui s'en viennent de guerre.*

Le plus jeune des trois

There are three little drums
Oh, who return from the war. (repeat)
Vri, vra, vri, vra, vra,
Oh, who return from the war.

The youngest of the three

continued on next page

Il apporte la rose aimée (bis)

Vri, vra, vri, vra, vra,

Il apporte la rose aimée.

He carries the beloved rose. (repeat)

Vri, vra, vri, vra, vra,

He carries the beloved rose.

Le plus vieux des trois

c'est le sabre et la ceinture (etc.)

The oldest of the three,

He is the saber (sword) and the belt. (etc.)

O Madame Lersé,

vous me donnerez pas votre fille (etc.)

Oh, Madame Lersé,

Will you not give me your daughter (etc.)

Non, petit tambour,

vous êtes un peu trop pauvre (etc.)

No, little drum,

You are a little too poor (etc.)

O petit tambour,

qui c'est qu'est votre papa-ze (etc.)

Oh, little drum,

Who is your father (etc.)

O Madame Lersé,

c'est le roi de l'Angleterre (etc.)

Oh Madame Lersé

He is the king of England (etc.)

O petit tambour

mais tu peux prendre ma fille (etc.)

Oh little drum,

but you can take my daughter (etc.)

Non, Madame Lersé,

je vous en remercie bien de votre fille (etc.)

No, Madame Lersé,

I thank you very much for your daughter (etc.)

Là-bas dans mon pays

y en a des riches, des pauvres (etc.)

Over there in my country

There are rich one, poor ones (etc.)

Là-bas dans mon pays

y en a des belles, des laides (etc.)

Over there in my county

There are pretty one, ugly ones (etc.)

26. LA BELLE ALLAIT AU MOULIN

(THE BEAUTIFUL GIRL WENT TO THE MILL)

EVANGELINE SALTZMAN

A beautiful girl goes to the mill on Martin's donkey. The miller sees them coming, laughs, and tells her to tie up the donkey and come into the mill. While the mill is grinding, the miller woos her, and a wolf eats the donkey. The miller offers the girl money to replace her father's (Martin's) donkey, but begs her to return to the mill. The father sees them coming with a new donkey and cries, "My donkey had four white feet, and two pinned-back ears." Her father gets drunk and continues to insist that that is not his donkey.

This song is well known in both France and Canada. The story is based on an old superstition that all donkeys change their skins on September 29, St. Michael's Day. In France the donkey is also called Martin, but in Canada it changes its name as well as its skin.

La belle allait, oui, -z-au moulin,

c'est ni-z-à pied, ni-z-à cheval. (bis)

Elle allait sur-z-un âne,

dralane, dralane, dralane,

elle allait sur-z-un âne à Martin,

qui allait-z-au moulin.

The beautiful girl went to the mill, yes,

She went neither by foot nor by horse. (repeat)

She went on a donkey,

dralane, dralane, dralane,

she went on Martin's donkey,

which went to the mill.

Tant loin que le meunier les vu venir,

il faisait que rire qu'il puisse s'en tenir. (bis)

From faraway the miller saw them coming

He could not help but laugh at what he saw coming (repeat)

continued on next page

*Belle attachez votre âne,
dralane, dralane, dralane,
belle votre âne à Martin,
et (r)entrez au moulin.*

*Tandis que le moulin moudait
le meunier la courtisait. (bis)
Le loup, il a mangé l'âne
dralane, dralane, dralane,
le loup, il a mangé l'âne à Martin
qui allait-z-au moulin.*

*Tenez, la belle voilà-t-une somme,
oui, (r)achetez-vous un autre âne à Martin. (bis)
Oui, achetez-vous un autre âne
Mais revenez au moulin*

*Tant loin, que son père les vu venir
il faisait que pleurer qu'il puisse s'en tenir. (bis)
Je te dis c'est pas ça mon âne
qui allait-z-au moulin*

*Mon âne (dr)avait les quatre pieds blancs,
les deux oreilles en revenant. (bis)
Je te dis que c'est pas mon âne
qui allait-z-au moulin*

*Papa en a bu ce vin nouveau
ça y a troublé bien le cerveau. (bis)
Je te dis c'est pas ça mon âne
qui allait-z-au moulin.*

Beautiful one, tie up your donkey,
dralane, dralane, dralane,
Beautiful one, tie up Martin's donkey
and come into the mill.

While the mill was grinding
The miller courted her. (repeat)
The wolf, he ate the donkey,
dralane, dralane, dralane,
The wolf, he ate Martin's donkey
which went to the mill.

Look, beautiful one, here's a sum,
Yes, buy yourself another donkey from Martin. (repeat)
Yes, buy yourself another donkey
but return to the mill.

From faraway her father saw them coming,
He could not help but cry. (repeat)
I tell you that is not my donkey
Which went to the mill.

My donkey had four white feet,
Two ears backwards (repeat)
I tell you that is not my donkey
which went to the mill

Papa drank some of this new wine
That it trouble his brain. (repeat)
I tell you that is not my donkey
which went to the mill.

27. O OUI GRAND DIEU

(OH YES DEAR LORD)

EVANGELINE SALTZMAN

This is the popular French courting song *O, grand Dieu comme je suis à mon aise*. Odile Falcon also sang a version of this song, as did Inez Catalon, though Inez's version starts with the last line about the four mills.

*O oui grand Dieu que je suis-t-à mon aise,
quand j'ai ma mie auprès de moi. (bis)
Je lui ai dit un petit mot à l'oreille,
Ma douce amie-z-embrasse moi. (bis)*

*Comment tu veux, oui, que je t'embrasse,
(re)garde donc ce monde qui va dire mal de moi. (bis)
J'ai attendu dire que tu allais à la guerre
servir le roi sur ses Piémonts. (bis)*

*Quand tu serais sur ces hauts Piémontées,
à moi tu ne penseras plus. (bis)*

O, yes, dear Lord, I so much at ease
When my dear one is next to me. (repeat)
I whisper to her in her ear,
My sweet friend, kiss me. (repeat)

How could you want me to kiss you,
Look at those people who talk badly of me. (repeat)
I heard it said that you were going to war
to serve the king on his Piémonts. (repeat)

When you will be on those high Piémontées,
Of me you will no longer think. (repeat)

continued on next page

*O oui, oui, oui, ma petit(r)e mignonne,
le reste de mes jours je t'aimerai. (bis)
Je me ferai faire une petite image
à la ressemblance de ton visage, (bis)
Dedans ma poche de le mett(e)rai-z-et
cent fois le jour je l'embrasserai. (bis)*

*Quoi est-ce que tes camarades diront de toi,
de toi embrasser ce petit papier? (bis)
O je dirai c'est le portrait de ma douce ami(z)e
que j'ai quitté-z-en regrettant. (bis)*

*J'ai tant pleuré versé des larmes
que les ruisseaux m'en encoulaient. (bis)
Petit ruisseau en a fait grande rivière,
quatre moulins marchaient sur l'eau. (bis)*

Oh, yes, yes, yes, my dear (cute) little one
The rest of my days I will love you. (repeat)
I will have a little picture made for me
Resembling you face. (repeat)
In my pocket I will put it and
One hundred time a day I will kiss it. (repeat)

What will your comrades say about you,
About your kissing that little paper? (repeat)
Oh, I will say that this is the portrait of my sweet friend
Who I left which [much] regret. (repeat)

I cried so much, poured out tears
that the streams flooded over from them (repeat)
Little stream made a big river of it
Four mills turned on the water.

28. DESSUS LE PREMIER JOUR DES NOCES

(ON THE FIRST DAY OF MARRIAGE)

AGNES BOURQUE

This song is found in France as *La femme du marin* ("The Seaman's Wife"), and all through French Canada as both *Un commandement* ("An Order") and *J'ai fait une maîtress* ("I've Found a Mistress"). In this last version, the singer does indeed return to her first husband.

*Dessus le premier jour des noces
Il a été venu un commandement.
Il a été venu un commandement,
O un commandement de guerre.*

*C'est à la guerre qu'il faut aller.
C'est à la guerre qu'il faut partir
Quand la belle a entendu ça
Elle se mît de se désoler.*

*Ne pleurât pas autant la belle
Ne versez pas autant vos larmes
O ma campagne serait pas longue
Six semines à deux mois de plus.*

*O ma campagne a bien été belle
Elle a été belle et belle et longue
O ma campagne a bien duré
O Garde, elle a duré sept ans.*

*Au bout de la septième année
O quand j'ai revenu chez moi
C'était trouvé ma bien-aimée
Qu'elle sortait d'être répousée.*

Elle se retourne dessus sa mère

On the first day of the wedding
There came an order
There came an order
There came an order of war.

It's to the war that I must go
It's to the war that I must leave
When the beautiful one heard this
She became desolate.

Do not cry so much my beautiful one
Do not shed so many of your tears
O, my campaign will not be long
Six weeks to two months at most.

Oh, my campaign was lovely,
It was lovely and lovely and long
Oh, my campaign lasted
Look, it lasted seven years.

At the end of the seventh year
Oh when I returned to my home
It was to find my love
Had remarried.

She returns to her mother

*O Vierge, vierge, douce Vierge
O Vierge, vierge, douce Vierge
Quoi ce que deviendra de moi?
Garde donc sept ans je me croyais veuve
Et me voilà avec deux maris.*

*Courage, courage, courage ma fille
Que le premier choix de l'homme
O Que le premier choix de l'homme
lui appartient à lui ses droits.*

Oh, Virgin Mother, Virgin Mother, sweet Virgin Mother
Oh, Virgin Mother, Virgin Mother, sweet Virgin Mother
What will become of me?
Seven years I have believed myself widowed
But here I am with two husbands.

Courage, courage, courage, my daughter
The first choice of the man
The first choice of the man hold his rights.

29. MON NOUVEAU BEAU

(MY NEW BOYFRIEND)

LELIA LABAUVE

A girl tells her mother that she has a new boyfriend, but asks her not to tell her father because he'd forbid her to speak to him again. She describes his blue eyes, how she met him at the ball, he gave her a ring, how pleased she is with him, and that they're going to marry -- all the time pleading, don't tell dad. Many singers in South Louisiana, including Lula Landry, knew this piece, also called *J'ai été z'au bal* or *Dis pas a Pop*. It is in waltz time and may have been a *danse ronde*. There is also a version from a man's perspective. In other versions, when the singer says they will marry, she finally does concede to tell dear old Dad.

*Je me fais un nouveau beau, maman, haha (bis)
Je me fais un nouveau beau,*

I made a new boyfriend, Mama, haha (repeat)
I made a new boyfriend

*REFRAIN: Mais dis pas à Pop
Parce que je le veux
Je ne pourrais plus lui parler*

REFRAIN: But do not tell Pop
Because I want him and
I could not speak to him anymore

*Il a les yeux bleus, maman, haha (bis)
Il a les yeux bleus*

He has blue eyes, Mama, haha (repeat)
He has blue eyes

REFRAIN

REFRAIN

*On a été-z-au bal, maman, haha (bis)
On a été-z-au bal*

We went to the ball, Mama, haha (repeat)
We went to the ball

REFRAIN

REFRAIN

*Il m'a donné un bague, maman, haha (bis)
Il m'a donné un bague*

He gave me a ring, Mama, haha (repeat)
He gave me a ring

REFRAIN

REFRAIN

*Il m'avait plu, maman, haha (bis)
Il m'avait plu*

It pleased me, Mama, haha (repeat)
It pleased me

REFRAIN

REFRAIN

*On va se marier, maman, haha (bis)
On va se marier*

We are going to marry, Mama, haha (repeat)
We are going to marry

REFRAIN

REFRAIN

30. DIEU LAURENT

(GOD LAURENT)

MARY GUIDRY & LEO MEAUX

The quality of this recording makes it difficult to distinguish more than a few lines of the text, but it is included for the great tune and enthusiastic performance. It seems to be a creation story with enumeration of animals made by Dieu Laurent, e.g. *il voit un serpent...* (He sees a serpent); *il voit un corbeille...* (He sees a crow).

REFRAIN: Dieu Laurent qui nous (?)

Comme (?) (bis)

Il voit un cabron(?)

Il dit “t’es dinde”

Comme (?) (bis)

REFRAIN

Il voit un corneille

Il dit “t’es un chapon”

Comme (?) (bis)

REFRAIN

Il voit un serpent

Il dit “t’es un tortue(?)”

Comme (?) (bis)

REFRAIN

Il voit (?) tombé

Il dit c’est du sel(?)”

Comme (?) (bis)

REFRAIN

Il voit un corbeille(?)

Il dit tu es coton(?)

Comme (?) (bis)

REFRAIN

Femme dans la maison

(?)

Comme (?) (bis)

REFRAIN

A t’es jaloux

Parce que t’a pas dormi(?)

Comme (?) (bis)

REFRAIN

31. SUR LE BORD DE LA RIVIÈRE

(ON THE EDGE OF THE RIVER)

LUCIA BROUSSARD

*Sur le bord de la rivière
J'entends le bruit des eaux. (bis)*

Oui, là mourra des peines (bis)

*Belle bergère
Si vous le voyez
Votre beau berger
Vous le saluerez
Si vous le voyez*

On the edge of the river
I hear the sound of the water. (repeat)

Yes, there troubles will cease (repeat)

Beautiful shepherdess
If you see him
Your handsome shepherd
You will greet him
If you see him.

32. PENDANT LE CONTREDANSE

(DURING THE QUADRILLE)

LUCIA BROUSSARD

*Pendant la contredanse il y a avait des jolis garçons
qui avaient la complaisance de nous offrir des bonbons.*

*On les prend et on les refuse, on fait ce que l'on veut,
on fait ce que l'on veut aux pauvres vieux garçons.*

During the quadrille, there were some handsome boys
who were kind enough to offer us some candy.

We take them and we refuse them, we do what we want,
We do what we want to the poor old boys.

33. J'ÉTAIS À LA FONTAINE

(I WENT TO THE FOUNTAIN)

LUCIA BROUSSARD

This song is a member of a whole *Belle Berger* family of songs. The fullest version tells of the adventures of a young girl who out-smarts three knights who attempt to win her. Each has the reference to sinking to the bottom of a fountain or spring.

*J'étais à la fontaine pour pêcher du poisson.
Bon, bon, bon, bon
La fontaine était profonde et moi je suis coulé au fond
Zang zagri zing o wang et pling o plang
Et comme dit gros grain
La patate a trois nénaines.*

I went to the fountain to catch some fish.
Bon, bon, bon, bon.
The fountain was deep and me, I slipped to the bottom.
Zang zagri zing o wang and pling o plang
As big seed says
The potato has three godmothers.

34. EN VOILÀ TOUT

(THERE IT IS)

PARTY AT LENA GUIDRY'S HOUSE

This song was very popular in 17th- and 18th-century France. It is set in a pastoral scene and describes the long courting process. A man begs a father for his daughter's hand. The father says no, my daughter is too young to marry, court her another year. The man refuses saying courting for so long risks wasting his time. He calls the father a liar, says he's going away to cry all alone and mourn the time that has passed.

Rends-moi ta fille	Give me your daughter
Ah voilà tout	There it is
Dis pas non	Don't say no
Rends-moi ta fille	Give me your daughter
Ah voilà tout	There it is

Donnez-moi-la...	Give her to me
Sauvez Priat(?)	(?)
Sauvez(?) rendra	(?)
Le coeur est content	The heart is content
Voilà tout	There it is
(bis)	(repeat)

O non, ma fille	O no, my daughter
Elle est trop jeune	She's too young
En voilà tout	There it is
(bis)	(repeat)

Elle est trop jeune	She's too young
Encore un an	Give it another year
Faites-lui l'amour en attendant	Court her while waiting
Voilà tout.	There it is
(bis)	(repeat)

O non, l'amour	O no, love
Je lui fais plus	I'll court her no longer
En voilà tout.	There it is
(bis)	(repeat)

Garçon qui fait l'amour trop longtemps	The man who courts for too long
Il risquait souvent de perdre son temps	He often risks wasting his time
Voilà tout	There it is
(bis)	(repeat)

Je m'en irai	I'm going away
Tout dérangé	All upset
En voilà tout.	There it is
Je m'en irai	I'm going away
Dieu, t'es menteur	God, you're a liar
En voilà tout	There it is

Je m'en irai pleurer tout seul	I'm going away to cry alone
O Dieu dans l'heure du temps, ce temps passé	O God, (?) , this time that's passed
Voilà tout	There it is
(bis)	(repeat)