

There Is a Tavern in the Town

Lyrics and music perhaps by F. J. Adams, 1891

C
There is a tavern in the town, *in the town,*
G7
And there my true love sits him down,
Sits him down,
C C7 F
And drinks his wine 'mid laughter free,
G7 C
And never, never thinks of me.

CHORUS

G7
Fare thee well, for I must leave thee,
C
Do not let the parting grieve thee,
G7 C F C
And remember that the best of friends must part, *must part.*
C
Adieu, adieu, kind friends adieu, *yes adieu,*
C G7
I can no longer stay with you, *stay with you my honey,*
C C7 F
I'll hang my heart on a weeping willow tree,
G7 C
And may the world go well with thee.

G7 C
He left me for a damsel dark, *damsel dark,*
G7
Each Friday night they used to spark, *used to spark,*
C C7 F
And now my love once true to me,
G7 C
Takes that dark damsel on his knee.

CHORUS

C
Oh! dig my grave both wide and deep,
Wide and deep,
G7
Put tombstones at my head and feet,
Head and feet,
C C7 F
And on my breast carve a turtle dove,
G7 C
To signify I died of love.

CHORUS

History

Johns Hopkins, Sheridan Libraries & University Museums, The Lester S. Levy Sheet Music Collections credits the authorship of “**There Is a Tavern in the Town**” to F.J. Adams, 1891.

www.folklorist.org/ records a “**There Is A Tavern In The Town,**” Bodleian, Firth Broadside distributed by R. March and Co. (London) sometime during the period 1887 - 1884. The author is not identified.


“**There Is a Tavern in the Town**” is one of the many variants of the the *Died for Love* theme, originally clustered by Steve Roud as Roud 60.

The singer laments her lover, who courted her ardently but now goes to a tavern and courts others while leaving her pining. She hopefully anticipates dying and being buried.

Vera Aspey sang this song as “**The Blackbird**” on her 1977 Topic album *The Blackbird*. She commented in her sleeve notes: As sung to me by Emma Vickers of Burscough, who as a child often travelled on her grandfather’s horse-drawn working boat, carrying coal along the canal, from Leigh to Tanhouse in Liverpool. Once there, he would load with cotton from the docks to transport and unload at various factories on the way to Leeds. It was on such a trip as this that Emma learned “The Blackbird” from the singing of her grandfather, as he steered his boat along the cut.

Laura Smyth sang “There Is a Tavern” on her and Ted Kemp's 2017 CD *The Poacher's Fate*. They noted: Also known as “Died for Love”, this song is a lament for love grown cold. It consists of a number of “floating verses”, words and phrases which are found in a range of songs, but here combine to express the sentiment of heartache beautifully. This song was sung by Emma Vickers of Burscough, Lancashire. The tune is similar to that used in the traditional ballad concerning “Lord Franklin”.



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