

BANKS OF THE CONDAMINE

HARK, HARK, THE DOGS ARE BARKING, I CAN NO LONGER STAY
THE BOYS HAVE ALL GONE SHEARING , I HEARD THE PUBLICAN SAY
AND I MUST BE OFF IN THE MORNING LOVE BEFORE THE SUN DO SHINE
TO MEET THE ROMA SHEARERS ON THE BANKS OF THE CONDAMINE

OH WILLIE DEAREST WILLIE DONT LEAVE ME HERE TO MOURN
DONT MAKE ME CURSE AND RUE THE DAY THAT EVER I WAS BORN
FOR PARTING WITH YOU WILLIE IS LIKE PARTING WITH MY LIFE
SO STAY AND BE A SELECTOR LOVE AND I WILL BE YOUR WIFE

OH NANCY DEAREST NANCY YOU KNOW THAT I MUST GO
THE SQUATTERS ARE EXPECTING ME THEIR SHEARING FOR TO DO
AND WHEN I'M ON THE BOARD MY LOVE I'LL THINK OF YOU WITH PRIDE

AND MY SHEARS THEY WILL GO FREELY WHEN I'M ON THE WHIPPING SIDE
OH I'LL CUT OFF MY YELLOW HAIR AND GO ALONG WITH YOU
I'LL DRESS MYSELF IN MEN'S ATTIRE AND BE A SHEARER TOO
I'LL COOK AND COUNT YOUR TALLY LOVE WHILST RINGER-O YOU SHINE
AND I'LL WASH YOUR GREASY MOLESKINS ON THE BANKS OF THE CONDAMINE

OH NANCY DEAREST NANCY YOU KNOW YOU CANNOT GO
THE BOSS HAS GIVEN HIS ORDERS NO WOMAN MAY DO SO
AND YOUR DELICATE CONSTITUTION ISN'T EQUAL UNTO MINE
TO EAT THE RAMSTAG MUTTON ON THE BANKS OF THE CONDAMINE

BUT WHEN THE SHEARING'S OVER I'LL MAKE OF YOU MY WIFE
I'LL GET A BOUNDARY RIDING JOB AND SETTLE DOWN FOR LIFE
AND WHEN THE DAYS' WORK'S DONE MY LOVE AND THE EVENING IT IS FINE
I'LL TELL OF THEM SANDY COBBLERS ON THE BANKS OF THE CONDAMINE

Notes

First published as 'The Banks of the Riverine' in the Queenslander in 1894 This version from the singing of A.L.Lloyd. Folklorist Dr Edgar Waters writes (Australian Tradition Oct 1966) : "The Banks of the Condamine seems to have been one of the most widely distributed bush songs. In recent years it has been reported from singers in northern Victoria and the Northern Territory, and a number of different versions have been recorded in New South Wales and in Queensland. Sometimes the man is going off to a horse-breaking camp rather than a shearing shed. In Victoria, and at least in southern New South Wales, it seems to have been known as 'The Banks of the Riverine', and perhaps this was the original form. The words of 'The Banks of the Condamine' were made over from 'The Banks of the Nile', a British Ballad of the beginning of the nineteenth century."