

Red Running Rue

Billy Waggs, Red Lion, Orwell 1908 collected by Ralph Vaughan Williams



* denotes collected verses . All other verses from trad sources.

Original song did not have last two lines repeated, but I like to do so.

*Come all you pretty maidens all, And young men in your prime.
I would have you keep your gardens clean, And let no-one steal your thyme.

Oh I once had a sprig of thyme And it flourished by night and by day
Till at length there came a false young man And he stole my thyme away.

And now my thyme is all gone and I cannot plant any new
But in the place where my thyme of old was laid Is grown a red running rue.

Now rue is a running running root And it runs so far underneath
But I will pluck that red running rue and I'll plant a jolly oak tree.

Now the gardener was standing by. I asked him to choose for me
He chose me the primrose the violet and the vine but I did them overlook all three.

For in June there's a red rosy bud. But that's not the flower for me.
How oftentimes I've plucked at that red rosy bud And I've gained the willow tree.

*Green willow it will twist Green willow it will twine
I wish I was in that young man's arms That once had the heart of mine.

Green willow I will sing, Green willow shall be my song
That all the world might plainly see That I once loved a false young man.