

## Motherless Child

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of three staves. The first staff contains measures 1-4 with chords Dm, Gm, Dm, Gm, and Dm. The second staff contains measures 5-8 with chords Dm, Gm, and Dm. The third staff contains measures 9-12 with chords Gm and Dm. The melody features several triplet markings over the eighth notes.

1. Sometimes I feel like a motherless child,  
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child,  
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child,  
A long ways from home, a long ways from home,  
O Lordy, a long ways from home.
2. Sometimes I feel like I have no friend,  
Sometimes I feel like I have no friend,  
Sometimes I feel like I have no friend,  
A long ways from home, a long ways from home,  
O Lordy, a long ways from home.
3. Sometimes I feel like I'd never been born,  
Sometimes I feel like I'd never been born,  
Sometimes I feel like I'd never been born,  
A long ways from home, a long ways from home,  
O Lordy, a long ways from home.
4. Sometimes I feel like a feather in the air,  
Sometimes I feel like a feather in the air,  
Sometimes I feel like a feather in the air,  
A long ways from home, a long ways from home,  
O Lordy, a long ways from home.
5. Sometimes I feel like I'm almost gone,  
Sometimes I feel like I'm almost gone,  
Sometimes I feel like I'm almost gone,  
A long ways from home, a long ways from home,  
O Lordy, a long ways from home.

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"Motherless Child", also known as "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child") is a traditional Negro spiritual. It dates back to the era of slavery in the United States. An early performance of the song dates back to the 1870s by the Fisk Jubilee Singers. Like many traditional songs, it has many variations and has been recorded widely.

The earliest publication of it found so far is in Barton's **Plantation Hymns** (1899) though the song is from much earlier.

Arrangements have been attributed to Harry Burleigh (1918), J. W. Johnson and J. R. Johnson (1926). It was recorded by Paul Robeson, Fred Waring Glee Club, Lena Horne, Harry Belafonte, Mahalia Jackson, Louis Armstrong, Pete Seeger, Odetta, Peter, Paul and Mary and many others.

A version is printed in John and Alan Lomax's **Best Loved American Folk Songs (Folk Song USA)**. It has been published in 14 hymnals of various denominations.