

The Croppy Boy

D7 G C D7

5 G C G

10 D7 C G

1. It was early, early in the spring
The birds did whistle and sweetly sing,
Changing their notes from tree to tree
And the song they sang was Old Ireland free.
2. It was early early in the night,
The yeoman cavalry gave me a fright.
The yeoman cavalry was my downfall
And I was taken by Lord Cornwall.
3. 'Twas in the guard-house where I was laid,
And in a parlour where I was tried.
My sentence passed and my courage low
When to Dungannon I was forced to go.
4. As I was passing my father's door
My brother William stood at the door.
My aged father stood at the door
And my tender mother her hair she tore.
5. As I was going up Wexford Street
My own first cousin I chanced to meet.
My own first cousin did me betray
And for one bare guinea swore my life away.
6. As I was walking up Wexford Hill
Who could blame me to cry my fill?
I looked behind, and I looked before
But my aged mother I shall see no more.
7. And as I mounted the platform high
My aged father was standing by.
My aged father did me deny
And the name he gave me was the Croppy Boy.
8. It was in Dungannon this young man died
And in Dungannon his body lies
And you good people that do pass by
Oh shed a tear for the Croppy Boy.

"The Croppy Boy" is an Irish ballad set in 1798 rising relating to the despair of a doomed young "croppy" or rebel during the 1798 Rising. "Croppies" wore their hair cut close to the head as a token of sympathy with the French Revolution.

Versions of the ballad first appeared shortly after the rising sung by street peddlers and there are several broadside songs printed. There are two songs called "The Croppy Boy", both of which derive from the Rebellion of 1798. The more literary of the two was written by William B. McBurney, who used the pseudonym Carroll Malone, and concerns a Croppy who seeks confession from a priest, only to find that the 'priest' is a yeoman officer in disguise.

This version is a street ballad which predates Malone's and is much less literary in style. It is similar to the Child ballad "The Maid Freed from the Gallows" and with the Ulster song "The Streets of Derry".

All three are progressive execution songs with rejection by the family as a significant motif.

This version is from the Clancy Brothers. It is the same lyric as printed in Galvin.

It was printed in Galvin's **Irish Songs of Resistance**.

It was recorded by Louis Killen on **A Bonny Bunch**, The Dubliners on **More of the Hard Stuff** and The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem on **The Rising of the Moon** and **20 Greatest Ever Irish Rebel Songs, Vol. 1**.