

Molly Bawn



1. Come all you young fellows that carry a gun,
I'll have you come home by the light of the sun,
For young Jimmy was a fowler, and a-fowling alone,
When he shot his own true love in the room of a swan.
2. As Polly went walking, a rainstorm come on,
She hid under the bushes, the shower for to shun.
With her apron wrapped over her, he took her for a swan,
And his gun didn't miss, and it was Polly his own.
3. Then home rushed young Jimmy, with his dog and his gun,
Crying, "Uncle, dear Uncle, have you heard what I've done?
Oh, cursed be that gunsmith that made my old gun,
For I've shot my own true love, in the room of a swan."
4. Then out rushed bold uncle, with his locks hanging grey,
Crying, "Jimmy, dear Jimmy, don't you run away.
Don't you leave your own country till your trial come on,
For they never will hang you for the shooting of a swan."
5. Well, the funeral of Polly, it was a brave sight,
With four and twenty young men, and all dressed in white,
They took her to the graveyard and they laid her in the clay,
And they bid adieu to Polly, and all went away.
6. Now, the girls of this country, they're all glad, we know,
To see Polly Vaughn a-lying so low.
You could gather them into a mountain, you could plant them in a row,
And her beauty would shine amongst them like a fountain of snow.
7. Well, the trial wore on, and young Polly did appear,
Crying, "Uncle, dear Uncle, let Jimmy go clear,
For my apron was bound round me, and he took me for a swan,
And my poor heart lay a-bleeding all on the green ground."

"Molly Bawn" (Gaelic: "*An Cailín Bán*") is also known as "Molly Bon", "Polly Vaughn", "Polly Von", "The Shooting of His Dear", "As Jimmie Went A-Hunting", "The Fowler" and other similar variations.

In this relatively recent version, Molly is covered by her white apron and is mistaken for a swan. In older versions, closer to the folk/fairy tale roots, Molly would be a "shape-shifter" who could assume the shape of, or become an actual swan. When she dies, her shape reverts to her actual human form.

It was printed in Edward Bunting's **General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland** (1796).

It has been recorded by Seamus Ennis, A. L. Lloyd, Harry Cox, Peter, Paul and Mary, Peter Bellamy, The Dubliners, The Chieftains with Alison Krauss, John Roberts and Tony Barrand and others.