

The Old lady Who Swallowed a Fly

Verse 1

C G7

Verse 2

C G7

C G7 C

Verse 3-7

C G7

C C

G7 C G7

C

The musical notation is written on a single staff in 6/8 time. It consists of several lines of music, each corresponding to a verse. The notation includes various note values (quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes) and rests. Chord symbols (C and G7) are placed above the staff to indicate the harmonic structure. The music is a simple melody that repeats with different lyrics for each verse.

1. I know an old lady who swallowed a fly.
I don't know why she swallowed the fly
Perhaps she'll die.
2. I know an old lady who swallowed a spider
That wriggled and tiggled and jiggled inside her.
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly
I don't know why she swallowed the fly
Perhaps she'll die.
3. I know an old lady who swallowed a bird
How absurd! She swallowed a bird!
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider
That wriggled ... etc.
4. I know an old lady who swallowed a cat.
How about that? She swallowed a cat!
She swallowed the cat to catch the bird
She swallowed the bird ... etc.
5. I know an old lady who swallowed a dog
Oh what a hog! She swallowed a dog!
She swallowed the dog to catch the cat
She swallowed the cat ... etc.
6. I know an old lady who swallowed a goat.
She opened her throat and down went the goat!
She swallowed the goat to catch the dog
She swallowed the dog ... etc.
7. I know an old lady who swallowed a cow.
I don't know how but she swallowed that cow!
She swallowed the cow to catch the goat
She swallowed the goat ... etc.
8. I know an old lady who swallowed a horse
(spoken) She died, of course!

"Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly" is a children's rhyme and song of the cumulative type (like "The Twelve Days of Christmas").

The song was written by Rose Bonne (lyrics) and Alan Mills and copyrighted in 1952. At that time it was entitled simply "I Know an Old Lady".

Three versions of the rhyme were collected in the journal **Hoosier Folklore** in December 1947.

It was printed in Seeger's **Bells of Rhymney** (1964),

It was recorded by Pete Seeger on **Birds Bugs and Little Fishes** (1955), Burl Ives on **Folk Songs, Dramatic and Humorous** (1953), and Alan Mills on **Animals** (1956).

I probably learned it from Pete Seeger.