

The Prisoner's Song



1. Oh, I wish I had someone to love me,
Someone to call me their own,
Oh, I wish I had someone to live* with
'Cause I'm tired of livin'* alone.
2. Oh, please meet me tonight in the moonlight.
Please meet me tonight all alone,
For I have a sad story to tell you.
It's a story that's never been told.
3. I'll be carried to the new jail tomorrow
Leaving my poor darling all alone,
With the cold prison bars all around me
And my head on a pillow of stone.
4. Now I have a grand ship on the ocean,
All mounted with silver and gold
And before my poor darlin' would suffer
Oh! that ship would be anchored and sold.
5. Now if I had wings like an angel,
Over these prison walls I would fly
And I'd fly to the arms of my poor darlin'
And there I'd be willing to die.

**Hank Snow's recording has "sleep with" and "sleepin' alone".
The second verse feels like it should be a chorus but it's not.*

"The Prisoner's Song", is a song copyrighted by Vernon Dalhart in 1924 in the name of Dalhart's cousin Guy Massey, who had sung it while staying at Dalhart's home and had in turn heard it from his brother Robert Massey, who may have heard it while serving time in prison.

"The Prisoner's Song" was one of the best-selling songs of the 1920s. Victor pressed slightly over 1.3 million copies during the record's peak years of popularity. The song's publisher at the time, Shapiro, Bernstein & Co., reportedly sold over one million copies of the song's sheet music. The Vernon Dalhart version was recorded on Victor Records in October 1924. It was published as the B side with "The Wreck of the Old 97", also titled "The Wreck of the Southern Old 97", which had been a money-maker for other record companies on the A side.

The last verse of this song was the inspiration for Albert E. Brumley's "I'll Fly Away".

It was performed and recorded by Hank Snow, Bill Monroe, Brenda Lee, Johnny Cash, Eddy Arnold, Bill Monroe and others.