

The Riddle Song

Based on an ancient English ballad, "Captain Wedderburn's Courtship," this song was brought to the New World in the middle of the eighteenth century and was first popularized by the Mountain people of Kentucky. It has become the most popular song of its genre. Riddles and paradoxes are a traditional subject of the lyrics of courtship. By posing the riddle the lady gains time, and by solving it her suitor is assured of receiving his beloved's affections. Often verses were added to prolong the riddle, while the lady sought to delay the passionate moment for the sake of her virtue.



American

Moderately and simply

Chords: F, Fmaj7, Dm, F, Bbmaj7, C9, F

1. I gave my love a cher-ry that had no stone. I
 2. How can there be a cher-ry that has no stone? How
 3. A cher-ry when it's bloom-ing, it has no stone. A

Chords: C, C7, F, Bb, F, G9, C

gave my love a chick-en that had no bone. I
 can there be a chick-en that has no bone? How
 chick-en when it's pip-pin', it has no bone. The

Chords: C7, F, Bb, F, G9, C, C7

told my love a sto-ry that had no end. I
 can there be a sto-ry that has no end? How
 sto-ry that I love you, it has no end. A

F Bb Gm7 C9 F

gave my love a ba - by that's no cry - in'.
can there be a ba - by that's no cry - in'?
ba - by when it's sleep - ing, it's no cry - in'.