Sing A Song Of Sixpence

Words & Music: Traditional English

According to Wikipedia, this song first appeared in print in Volume II of <u>Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song Book</u>, published around 1744. (The claim that it was written by the literary critic George Stevens is spurious.) The recipe for blackbird pie "to make pies so that birds may be alive in them and flie out when it is cut up." dates from a 1549 Italian Cookbook (translated into English in 1598) and the recipe was reiterated in another 1723 English cookbook. The notion that it refers to "pie birds" (a device to help cook pies correctly) is probably incorrect, since it is unsure if the devices even existed when this rhyme was written.

D A7
Sing a song of sixpence, a pocket full of rye;
A7 D
Four and twenty blackbirds baked in a pie.
D A7
When the pie was opened the birds began to sing.
A7 D
Now, wasn't that a dainty [alt: "lovely"] dish to set before the king?

The King was in his counting house, counting out his money
The queen was in the parlor eating bread and honey
The maid was in the garden hanging out the clothes
When down came a black bird and pecked off her nose
[alt: "Along came a blackbird and nipped off her nose!"]