

Willie's Lady

(Ray Fisher version 1 - Martin Carthy cover)

Words & Music:
Traditional English & Breton(?)

Notes from the Mudcat Café on this song: :Ray Fisher married the words to the tune of the Breton "Son ar Chiste" (The Song of Cider) which was written in 1930 by a piper who is now a tramp on the streets of Paris. The story of the song is very close to that of the birth of Hercules, although there the timing of the trickery is, if anything, even more critical."

To play like Martin Carthy, try tuning your guitar to DAD EAE (or CGCDGA or DADGAD) and noodle along the melody line while keeping the drone going. Don't worry about meter. Better yet, go search for his books or videos. There is no one else like him.

King Willie, he's sailed over the raging foam.
He's wooed a wife and he's brought her home.

He wooed her for her long golden hair.
His mother wrought her a mighty care.

A weary spell she's laid on her:
She'd be with child for long and many's a year.
But the child she would never bear.

And in her bower she lies in pain.
King Willie at her bed-head, he do stand.
As down his cheeks the salten tears do run.

King Willie back to his mother he did run
And he's gone there as a begging son.

Said: "Me true love has this fine noble steed,
The like of which you ne'er did see.

At every part of this horse's mane,
There's hanging fifty silver bells and ten.
There's hanging fifty bells and ten.

This goodly gift, shall be your own.
If back to my own true love you'll turn again
That she might bear her baby son.

Of the child, she'll never lighter be
Nor from sickness will she e'r be free

But she will die and she will turn to clay
And you will wed with another maid.

Then, sighing, said this weary man
As back to his own true love he's torn again
"I wish my life were at an end."

King Willie back to his mother he did run
And he's gone there as a begging son.

Said: "Me true love has this fine golden girdle,
Set with jewels all about the middle."

At every part of this girdles hem.
There's hanging fifty silver bells and ten.
There's hanging fifty bells and ten.

This goodly gift, shall be your own.
If back to my own true love you'll turn again
That she might bear her baby son.

Oh, Of the child, she'll never lighter be
Nor from sickness will she e'r be free

But she will die and she will turn to clay
And you will wed with another maid.

Then, sighing, said this weary man
As back to his own true love he's torn again
"I wish my life were at an end."

Then up and spoke his noble queen,
And she has told King Willie of a plan
How she might bear her baby son.

She said: "You must go get you down to the market place
And you must buy a you loaf of wax.

And you must shape it as a babe that is to nurse.
And you must make two eyes of glass.

And ask your mother to a Christening day
And you must stand there, close as you can be
That you can hear what she do say.

King Willie, he's gone down to the market place.
And he has bought him a loaf of wax.

And he has shaped it as a babe that is to nurse
And he has made two eyes of glass.

He asked his mother to the Christening day
And he has stood there, as close as he could be
That he might hear what she did say.

How she spoke, and how she swore
She spied the babe where no babe could be before
She spied the babe where none could be before

Says: "Who was it, who undid the nine witch knots,
Braided in amongst this lady's locks.

And who was it took out the combs of care,
Braided in amongst this lady's hair.

And who was it slew the master kid
That ran and slept all beneath this lady's bed
That ran and slept all beneath her bed.

And who was it unlaced her left shoe
And who was it that let her lighter be
That she might bear her baby boy.

And it was Willie who undid the nine witch knots
Braided in amongst this lady's locks.

And it was Willie who took out the combs of care,
Braided in amongst this lady's hair.

And it was Willie the master kid did slay
And it was Willie who unlaced her left foot shoe
And he has let her lighter be.

And she has born of a baby son
And greater the blessings that be them upon
And greater the blessings them upon