

Appendix Two – Sparrow’s Lyrics

Artiste/Composer ©: The Mighty Sparrow (Slinger Francisco)
Calypso: Dan Is The Man (In The Van)
Originally released: 1963

(Transcribed in the vernacular, by Richard Wm. Thomas)

Captain!
There's a traitor on board!
Examine the horn!

According to the education you get when you small,
You will grow up with true ambition and respect from one and all.
But in my days in school, they teach me like a fool,
The things they teach me ah should be ah block-headed mule.

And wey dey teach yuh?
Dey teach mih: pussy has finished his work long ago an' now he resting an'
ting.
Solomon a Gundy was born on ah Monday, de ass in de lion skin.
Winkin, Blinkin and Nod, sail off in ah wooden sloop,
De 'gouti lose he tail an' de alligator fighting, to make monkey-liver soup!
An' Dan, is the man, in the van!

Wepsee mama!

De poems an' de lessons dey write an' sen' from England
Impress me dey were trying to cultivate comedians!
Comic books made more sense: you know it's fictitious, without pretence.
Cutteridge wanted to keep us in ignorance!

Tell me if dis eh chupidness:
Humpy-Dumpty sat on a wall!
Humpy-Dumpy did fall!
Goosey, Goosey Gyander?
Where shall I wander?
Ding, dong, del!!
Pussy in de well!
R-I-K-K-I-T-I-K-K-I-Ah-T-Ah-V
Ah Rikki Tikki Tikki Tavi!
Dan, is de man, in de van!
Wepsee mama! Yep!

Ah say, Cutteridge was plenty times more advanced dan dem scientist,
I en believe dat no one man could write so much stupidity.
Aeroplanes didn' come so soon, scientists used to make de grade in balloon.
Cutteridge make a cow jump over the moon!

*An' then he tell dem:
 Tom, Tom de piper's son!
 Teef ah pig an' away he run!
 Once dere was a woman who lived in ah shoe,
 She had so many children she didn' know what to do!
 Dickory a-dickory dock!
 De mouse ran up de clock!
 De lion and de mouse,
 Ah woman pushing ah cow
 To eat grass on top of ah house!
 Ah an' Dan, is de man, in de van!*

*Aeyyyyyyyuh!
 Wipsee mama!*

*How I happen to get some education my friends, me eh know!
 All dey teach me is about Beer Rabbit an' Rumpelstilskin-o.
 Dey wanted to keep me down indeed, dey try dey best, but didn' succeed
 You see, mih head was duncee an' up to now ah cyar read!*

*Who cares about:
 Peter, Peter was ah pumpkin eater?
 Some little, little people tie Gulliver?
 When I was sick an' lay a-bed
 I had two pillow at my head?
 De goose lay de golden egg?
 De spider catch a fly?
 Morocoy with wings flapping in de sky?
 Dey beat me like ah dog to learn dat in school,
 If me head was bright ah woulda be a dahm fool!*

*With Dan is de man in de van
 Can a pig dance a jig for a fig?
 Twirly and Twisty were two screws!
 Mister Mike, goes to school, on a bike!
 Dan is de man, in de van!
 Dan is de man, in de van!
 Yeah! Dan is de man, in de van*

The Slave

Performed by The Mighty Sparrow

I'm a slave from a land so far

I was caught and

I was brought here from Africa

I'm a slave from a land so far

I was caught and

I was brought here from Africa

Well it was licks like fire

From de white slavemaster

Everyday I dong on knees

Weeks and weeks before we cross de seas to reach in de West Indies

And den he make we wuk (den ah wuk)

And den ah wuk (he make meh wuk)

Good lord no pay

Ah toil

Ah toil, Ah toil

Ah toil so hard each day

I'm dying

Oh oh-oh...oh oh

I'm crying

Oh oh-oh...oh oh

Oh Lord I wanna be free

Many times ah wanted to run
But de (?) slavemaster standing dey wit de gun
Oh I know he go shoot to kill
So ah stay, stay and ah pray
But ah planning still
I study night and day how to break away
Ah got to make a brilliant escape
But everytime ah tink about de whip an' dem dogs
Meh body does start tuh shake

He make we wuk (den ah wuk)
Ah said ah wuk (he make meh wuk)
Oh lord no pay
Ah toil
Ah toil, Ah toil
Ah toil so hard each day
I'm dying
Oh oh-oh...oh oh
I'm crying
Oh oh-oh...oh oh
Oh Lord I wanna be free

La la la la la...

In my heart, there was much to say
Ah always hope de boss woulda listen to me some day
Although he knew (damn well knew) my request was very small
But de sting ah the whip there to answer me when ah call
We had to chant and sing to express ourselves
To dat wicked and cruel man
That was the only medicine to make he listen
And is so calypso began

He make we wuk (den ah wuk)
Ah said ah wuk (he make meh wuk)
Oh lord no pay
Ah toil
Ah toil, ah toil
Ah toil hard each day
I'm dying
Oh ooh-oh-oh...oh oh
I'm crying
Oh ooh-oh-oh...oh oh
Oh Lord I wanna be free

(La da da da dey....)

And den times change in so many, many many ways
Then one day somebody said "Free de bloody slaves"

I was then

Put out on the street

Ah ha' no clothes, ha' no food and no place to sleep

Worst of all

Had no education, no particular ambition

This I cannot conceal

Forgot my native culture

Ah lived like a vulture, from de white man ah had to steal

Because he make we wuk

Ah said ah wuk

Oh lord no pay

Ah toil

Ah toil

Ah toil, ah toil

Ah toil hard each day

I'm dying

Oh ooh-oh-oh...oh oh.....

I'm crying

Oh ooh-oh-oh...oh oh.....

Oh Lord I wanna be free