

John Riley

Sung to Ralph Vaughan Williams by Mr Stevenson, 20.12.1911, in Depwade Union Workhouse, Pulham, Norfolk.
Words from George Orton at Brigg, Lincolnshire, 8.4.1906, noted by Percy Grainger.

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of five systems of two staves each. The first system contains the first line of lyrics: 'As I walked out one eve - ning - clear down by the riv - er - side'. The second system contains the second line: 'ov - er - heard a maid com - plain as tears fell from her eyes. 'This'. The third system contains the third line: 'is 'a dark and stor - my night,' these words to me did say, 'my -'. The fourth system contains the fourth line: 'love is on the ra - ging sea, bound for A - mer - i - cay.'. The fifth system contains the fifth line: 'love is on the ra - ging sea, bound for A - mer - i - cay.'. The music is in a minor key with a common time signature.

1
As I walked out one evening clear down by the riverside
I overheard a maid complain as tears fell from her eyes.
'THIS IS A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT, MY
LOVE HAS GONE AWAY;
'MY LOVE IS ON THE RAGING SEA BOUND
FOR AMERICAY.

2
MY LOVE HE WAS A SAILOR LAD, HIS AGE WAS
SCARCE EIGHTEEN,
HE WAS AS NICE A SAILOR LAD AS EVER MY
EYES HAVE SEEN.
MY FATHER HE HAD RICHES GREAT, BUT RILEY
HE WAS POOR,
BECAUSE I LOVED MY SAILOR LAD THEY
COULD NOT ME ADORE'.

3
John Riley was her true love's name, he lived down by the
sea
her mother took her by the hand; these words to her did say,

*'If you are fond of Riley, he must leave this country
for your father swears he'll take his life, so shun his
company.*

4
OH MOTHER DEAR, DON'T BE SEVERE, WHERE WILL
I SEND MY LOVE??
FOR HIS VERY HEART LIES IN MY BREAST AS
CONSTANT AS A DOVE.'

*'Oh daughter dear, I'm not severe, here is a thousand pounds,
send Riley to Americay to purchase there some ground.'*

5
It happened twelve months after she was walking by the sea
when Riley he came back again and took his love away.
His ship was wrecked, all hands were lost; her father grieved
full sore
she died in her true lover's arms and they were seen no more.

This arrangement by Alan Helsdon, February 2023