

The Little Dog under the Wagon

“Come, wife,” said good old farmer Gray,
“Put on your things, ‘tis market day –
And we’ll be off to the nearest town,
There and back ere the sun goes down,
Spot? No, we’ll leave old Spot behind.”
But Spot he barked and Spot he whined,
And soon made up his doggish mind
To follow under the wagon.

Away they went at a good round pace,
And joy came into the farmer’s face;
“Poor Spot,” said he, “did want to come,
But I’m awful glad he’s left at home;
He’ll guard the barn, and guard the cot,
And keep the cattle out of the lot.”
“I’m not so sure of that,” thought Spot,
The little dog under the wagon.

The farmer all his produce sold,
And got his pay in yellow gold,
They started homeward after dark,
Home through the lonely forest. Hark!
A robber springs from around a tree –
“Your money or else your life,” said he;
The moon was up, but he didn’t see
The little dog under the wagon.

Spot ne’er barked, and Spot ne’er whined,
But quickly caught the thief behind;
He dragged him down in the mire and dirt,
And tore his coat and he tore his shirt,
Then held him fast on the miry ground;
The robber uttered not a sound –
While his hands and feet the farmer bound,
And tumbled him into the wagon.

So Spot he saved the farmer’s life,
The farmer’s money; the farmer’s wife;
And now a hero grand and gay,
A silver collar he wears to-day;
Among his friends, among his foes,
And everywhere his master goes,
He follows on his horny toes,
The little dog under the wagon.

(My mother, Evelyn Phyllis Barter Caldwell, used to recite this poem to my sister and me when we were small. On January 20, 2005, she recited it to me as she remembered it. Her version was very similar to the above – only a few word changes.

On July 25, 2008, Mr Jim Dixon posted a note on The Mudcat Café (<http://www.mudcat.org/thread.cfm?threadid=7453>), informing that he had found the poem on the Internet in the book, The Scrap-book: It Being a Thousand Gems of Prose and Poetry by a Thousand Authors, by Edward Louis Colen Ward (Wm. L. Allison, New York, 1899). It is posted at <http://books.google.com/books?id=4jVDAAAIAAJ&pg=PA56> . In this book, the source is listed as the New Orleans Picayune.

If anyone knows the author of this poem (or copyright owner), I would appreciate knowing it. My e-mail address is jcaldwell9@yahoo.com (or (backup) <mailto:foundation@mega.bw>). A lady e-mailed me once to tell me that her grandmother wrote it, but she never followed up with any documentation.

Mother was born in Grand Cascapedia, Quebec, Canada, and so it may have been written by a Canadian.

The word “cot” in the poem is an abbreviation of “cottage.”

Posted at Internet web sites <http://www.foundationwebsite.org> and <http://www.foundation.bw> .)

Updated 15 August 2008.

Update 19 May 2015:

A piano-vocal score is posted on the Musicaneo website (at http://www.musicaneo.com/sheetmusic/sm-74334_the_little_dog_under_the_wagon.html). The music is attributed to Thomas Brigham Bishop (see the Wikipedia article at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Brigham_Bishop), a nineteenth-century composer of popular music. Bishop was born in 1835 and died in 1905. The music score is copyrighted 1877 (J. M. Stoddart & Co.), and states “Words from the “BOYS.” So it is clear that Bishop did not write the poem. The lyrics differ a little from the version presented above.