

SILVER DAGGER [LAWS G21]

Traditional Old-Time and Bluegrass Song; **DATE:** Earliest text: Drowsy Sleeper- Bodelian Library 1817; Appears in The Social Harp 1855 (first verse only); Earliest complete version in US "Awake Awake!" sung by Mary Sands at Allandstand, NC Aug 1, 1916; **CATEGORY:** Early Country and Bluegrass Songs; **RECORDING INFO:** Oh Molly Dear (BVE 35667-3) Kelly Harrell-1926; Oh Molly Dear (BVE 39725-2) B. F. Shelton-1927; Sleepy Desert (Paramount 3282)- Wilmer Watts & the Lonely Eagles-1929; Wake Up You Drowsy Sleeper (BE 62575-2) Oaks Family-1930; Katie Dear (14524-2) Callahan Brothers (vcl duet w.gtrs)- 1934; Katie Dear (BS 018680-1) - Blue Sky Boys (vcl duet w/mdln & gtr)- 1938; Sarah Ogan Gunning; Joan Baez; Old Crowe Medicine Show; Dave Van Ronk; **OTHER NAMES:** Oh Molly Dear (Go Ask Your Mother); Katie Dear; Awake, Awake; Julianne; **RELATED TO:** "Greenback Dollar," "Old Virginny/East Virginia Blues/Dark Holler Blues," "Darling Think of What You've Done;" **NOTES:** "Silver Dagger" has the same basic plot as "Drowsy Sleeper" but the silver dagger is used as the suicide weapon. The relationship of "Drowsy Sleeper" with "Old Virginny/ East Virginia Blues/ Dark Holler Blues/ Man of Constant Sorrow" has been well documented. The Callahan Brothers learned Katie Dear (Silver Dagger) from their mother. This would probably bring the date back to the late 19th century at least.

Oh Kat - ie dear go ask your ma - ma
if you can be a bride of
mine if she says yes then we'll be mar - ried
if she says no we'll run a - way.

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F C F G
Oh Katie dear, go ask your mama, if you can be a bride of mine

F C G C
If she says yes, then we'll be married, if she says no, we'll run away.

Oh Willie dear, there's no need in asking, she's in her room taking her rest
And by her side is a silver dagger, to slay the one that I love best.

Oh Katie dear, go ask your papa, if you can be a bride of mine
If he says yes, come back and tell me, if he says no, we'll run away.

Oh Willie dear, there's no need in asking, he's in his room taking a rest
And by his side is a silver dagger, to slay the one that I love best.

So he picked up that silver dagger, and plunged it through his troubled heart
Saying, 'Goodbye Katie, goodbye darlin', it's now forever we must part.'

So she picked up that bloody dagger, and plunged it through her lily-white breast
Saying, 'Goodbye papa, goodbye mama, I'll die for the one that I love best.'