

Aunt Sue (Pete Sutherland)

One day in a bookstore, I happened to look
And I found her name a written in an old song book
A ballad she'd given them, was printed on the page
Just the way her mother sang it, in her old age.

Well, I asked my daddy, "Did you know your Aunt Sue?
Did she sing The Gypsy Davey or Two Sisters for you?
With your milk and your cookies, did she serve you up a song?
Oh, Dad, do you remember, though it's been so long?"

CHORUS: And I know more tunes than the man in the moon,
And each flying phrase is a sweet, living thing.
But I'd lay down this fiddle, just once could I hear
My dad's Aunt Susan sing!

BREAK

Now, Dad kinda chuckled and nodded his head,
"Boy, your Great Aunt Sue! Quite a character!" he said.
"She could tan the living hair off a young boy's hide,
She could tell us kids' a story, make us laugh till we cried.

But songs, I don't remember, couldn't tell you what kind.
She must have known some hymns, but I wouldn'ta paid no mind.
Those old folks were always singing some old parlor song,
More than that I couldn't tell you, it's been too long."

CHORUS and BREAK

I know more tunes than the man in the moon,
And each flying phrase is a sweet, living thing.
But I'd lay down this fiddle, just once could I hear
My dad's Aunt Susan sing!

Once the songs were passed along from mother down to child
And each family sang them in their own fine style.
Songs that seemed they'd last forever grew stranger every day,
Till no one cared to listen and they faded away.

I had to learn Aunt Susan's song from that old book I bought.
I could sing it for you now; right or wrong it's all I've got.
For the voice that could have taught me has been still for 40 years,
I just strain to hear an echo; that will never reach my ears.

Chorus 2 times

I know more tunes than the man in the moon,
And each flying phrase is a sweet, living thing.
But I'd lay down this fiddle, just once could I hear
My dad's Aunt Susan sing!

Written about Susan Montague of Woodstock VT who sang an archaic version of
"The Two Sisters" into collector Helen Hartness Flanders' tape recorder in the 30's.