

“Go Down, Moses”

Taken from the events from Exodus 3-12, when Moses asks the pharaoh to allow the Israelites to leave Egypt. The pharaoh refuses, whereupon Moses’s staff turns into a serpent, the waters of the Nile River flow blood red, and Egypt is afflicted with plagues of frogs, gnats, and flies. Next, an epidemic decimates the Egyptians’ flocks, and people and animals become festered with boils. Then comes lightning, hail, locusts, and daytime darkness. Finally, after the firstborn sons of the Egyptians, including the pharaoh’s own son, are struck dead, the pharaoh agrees to free the Israelites.

1 When Israel was in Egypt's land,
Let my people go,
oppressed so hard they could not stand,
Let my people go.

Refrain:
Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt's
land,
tell old Pharaoh: Let my people go.

2 The Lord told Moses what to do,
Let my people go,
to lead the Hebrew children through,
Let my people go.

Refrain:
Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt's
land,
tell old Pharaoh: Let my people go.

3 As Israel stood by the waterside,
Let my people go,
at God's command it did divide,
Let my people go.

Refrain:
Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt's
land,
tell old Pharaoh: Let my people go.

4 When they had reached the other shore,
Let my people go,
they let the song of triumph soar,
Let my people go.

Refrain:
Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt's
land,
tell old Pharaoh: Let my people go.

5 Lord, help us all from bondage flee,
Let my people go,
and let us all in Christ be free,
Let my people go.

Refrain:
Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt's
land,
tell old Pharaoh: Let my people go.

“Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”

Written by Wallace Willis, a former Choctaw slave from Oklahoma, was likely inspired by 2 Kings 2:11, “As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.” It is unclear whether he wrote these lyrics before or after the Civil War, but he is credited with writing several spirituals.

(Refrain) Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home.
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home.

1I looked over Jordan, and what did I see,
Coming for to carry me home.
A band of angels coming after me,
Coming for to carry me home.

Oh, Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home.
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home.

2If you get there before I do,
Coming for to carry me home.
Tell all my friends I'm coming too,
Coming for to carry me home.

Oh, Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home.
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home.

3The brightest day that ever I saw
Coming for to carry me home.
When Jesus washed my sins away,
Coming for to carry me home.

Oh, Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home.
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home.

4I'm sometimes up and sometimes down,
Coming for to carry me home.
But still my soul feels heavenly bound,
Coming for to carry me home.

Oh, Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home.
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home.