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english folk dance
and song society

Poverty Knock

Up every morning at five,
It's a wonder that we're still alive.
Tired and yawning in the cold morning,
It's back to the dreary old drive.

Oh dear, we're going to be late,
Gaffer is stood at the gate.
We're out of pocket, our wages he'll dock it;
We'll have to buy grub on the slate.

Chorus Poverty, poverty, knock, my loom is a-saying all day.
Poverty, poverty, knock, gaffer's too skinny to pay.
Poverty, poverty, knock, keeping one eye on the clock.
I know I can guttle, when I hear my shuttle,
Go poverty, poverty, knock.

And when our wages he'll bring,
We're often short of a string.
While we are fratchin', with gaffer for snatchin',
We know to his brass he will cling.

We've got to wet our own yarn,
By dipping it into the tarn.
It's wet and soggy and makes us feel groggy,
And there's mice in that dirty old barn.

Chorus

Sometimes a shuttle flies out,
And gives some poor woman a clout.
There she lies bleeding, but nobody's heeding,
Who's going to carry her out.

Oh dear, my poor head sings,
I should have woven three strings,
But threads they are breaking, and my back is aching.
Oh how I wish I had wings.

*This is a song about weaving. The chorus sounds like an old loom working.
The song was collected from Tom Sykes Daniel, a weaver.*

Additional Online Resources

- Audio recording

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