

Unknown

"Alaska"

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SILKIE

An earthly nurse sits and sings,
And aye, she sings by lily wean,
And little ken I my bairn's father,
Far less the land where he dwells in.

For he came on night to her bed feet,
And a grumbly guest, I'm sure was he,
Saying "Here am I, thy bairn's father,
Although I be not comely."

"I am a man upon the land,
I am a silkie on the sea,
And when I'm far and far frae land,
My home it is in Sule Skerrie."

And he had ta'en a purse of gold
And he had placed it upon her knee,
Saying, "Give to me my little young son,
And take thee up thy nurse's fee."

"And it shall come to pass on a summer's day,
When the sun shines bright on every stane,
I'll come and fetch my little young son,
And teach him how to swim the faem."

"And ye shall marry a gunner good,
And a right fine gunner I'm sure he'll be,
And the very first shot that e'er he shoots
Will kill both my young son and me."

Child #113

"The Great Silkie of Sule Skerry" is one of numerous tales of the Silkies, or seafolk, known to the inhabitants of the Orkney Islands and the Hebrides. These enchanted creatures dwell in the depth of the sea, occasionally doffing their seal skins

to pass
on land as mortal men. Legend has it that they then
accept human
partners, and some families on the islands actually
trace their
ancestry to such marriages. In more complete versions
of the
ballad, the Silkie's forecast of the death of himself and
his son
eventually come to pass. The tune is by Dr. James
Waters of
Columbia University. From "British Ballads and Folk
Songs from
the Joan Baez Songbook."
@myth @ballad @love @animal
see also SILKIE2
filename[SILKIE1
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