

Folk Song: Aura Lee

"Aura Lee" (sometimes spelled Aura Lea) is a minstrel song that was published in 1861 in Cincinnati, Ohio. It was written by an Englishman, George R. Poulton, who had come to America with his family as a boy in 1838, and W.W. Fosdick. It was a sentimental ballad telling the story of a young man who was in love with a beautiful, golden-haired maiden named Aura Lee.

Soon after "Aura Lee" was released, the American Civil War began, and it gained unexpected popularity with the trainee soldiers at West Point. It was adopted by the Confederate Army as a marching song and even made its way into some hymnals during that time. It has also been suggested that President Lincoln may have heard "Aura Lee" while visiting the troops during his Gettysburg Address.

Music and songs are important during periods of conflict to keep morale high and to give soldiers hope. Fiddles, banjos, fifes, and brass were played by campfires and even during the battles themselves. "Aura Lee" became a favorite for troops on both sides of the war. Soon, it grew in popularity across the Atlantic in England as well.

The folk song gained more popularity after it was featured in the 1941 movie, "The Blue Bird." In more recent times, the tune was used for the song "Love Me Tender," recorded by Elvis Presley, and Liberace released an instrumental version called "Maid with the Flaxen Hair."

Aura Lee

W. W. Fosdick
George R. Poulton
arr. Dennis Frayne

As the black-bird in the Spring, 'neath the wil-low tree,
So do ti do in re la re do ti la ti do, so

5
sat and piped, I heard him sing, in praise of Au-ra Lee.
so do ti do re la re re do ti la ti do

9 *rit.*
Au-ra Lee, Au-ra Lee, maid with gold-en hair,
Mi mi mi Mi mi mi mi re do re mi

13 *a tempo*
sun-shine came a-long with thee, and swal-lows in the air.
mi mi fa mi re la re do do ti mi re do

Aura Lee Lyrics

As the black-bird in the spring
'neath the willow tree,
Sat and piped I heard him sing
prais-ing Au-ra Lee.

Au-ra Lee! Au-ra Lee!
Maid of gold-en hair.
Sunshine came a-long with thee
and swal-lows in the air.

Take my heart and take my ring
I give my all to thee.
Take me for e-ter-ni-ty
dear-est Au-ra Lee.

Aura Lee! Aura Lee!
Maid of gold-en hair.
Sun-shine came a-long with thee
and swal-lows in the air.

In her blush the rose was born
'twas music when she spoke.
In her eyes the light of morn
spark-ling seemed to break.

Aura Lee! Aura Lee!
Maid of gold-en hair.
Sun-shine came a-long with thee
and swal-lows in the air.

Au-ra Lee the bird may flee
the wil-low's gold-en hair.
Then the win-try winds may be
blow-ing ev-'ry-where.

Aura Lee! Aura Lee!
Maid of gold-en hair.
Sun-shine came a-long with thee
and swal-lows in the air.

Yet if thy blue eyes I see
gloom will soon de-part.
For to me sweet Au-ra Lee
is sunshine to my heart.

Aura Lee! Aura Lee!
Maid of gold-en hair.
Sun-shine came a-long with thee
and swal-lows in the air.