

Folk Song: My Mother Told Me

“My Mother Told Me” is an ancient Viking song that dates all the way back to the 13th century. It was originally part of a book called Egill’s Saga. This tale was allegedly written by its titular character, Egill, though it is more likely to have actually been written by an Icelandic poet and historian by the name of Snorri Sturluson. It depicts the story of an Icelandic Viking family through several generations, following warriors in the family and the battles they fought throughout the years.

“My Mother Told Me” is a poem by Egill, the main character, after his first fight with someone as a young boy. He is victorious over the other boy, and he makes up this poem to celebrate, setting a precedent for his future as a warrior poet. The verses describe how his mother told him that he would one day get his own ship and sail to distant lands, fighting many battles and defeating his enemies.

This poem was later set to music and was passed down through the ages, becoming a beloved part of Scandinavian culture. It was most recently brought to modern audiences’ attention by a show called Vikings, which featured it in an episode. Since then, many different artists and musicians have created their own covers of this song, ensuring this piece of history continues to be passed on and celebrated throughout the generations.

My Mother Told Me

Song of the Vikings

Traditional
arr. Marie-Ève Mainguy

The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 62. The score consists of five systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The first system starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system begins at measure 8 and includes a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The third system begins at measure 13 and includes a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The fourth system begins at measure 18 and includes a piano (*p*) dynamic. The fifth system begins at measure 23 and includes a *rit.* (ritardando) marking. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of the fifth system.