

We Be

Collected from W.W. Piper, St Austell, c1930
Cornish Dialect and Folk Songs p24

We be rear-ken oan tha board, Oll a sla-ven oan tha cord.

(whistled...)

We be press-owt a saem, Wile tha yung an sneeks tha cream.

(whistled...)

We be wurken oan tha board,
Oll a sla-ven oan tha cord.
We be pressen owt a saem,
Wile tha yung un sneeks tha cream.

We be rasslen en tha yard
Wile tha varmer's wurken ard.
We be caaklen with tha gees
Wile tha public we do flees.

We be sengen with tha selk
Like melkmaed with tha melk.
We be coavren up tha feathers
Wile weem weeren owt ar leathers.

We be traapsen oan tha roads
Wile weem weter'n mee toads.
We be soggen croas tha downs
Wile tha gutrees with tha howns.

We be wurken nite an dae
Droo tha murce moanth a Mae.
We be altren ov ar toon
Fer tha end a sonoe Joon.

We be iver soa gud oan Sundaes
But weem river soa gud oan Mondaes.
We be midlen droo tha week
But a Saaterdaes musen speak.

We be waarm as mee blaanket
Wile we dubel thrid an twank et.
We be wisht an thurf fer soor
Wen tha traad be giten poer.

We be raedee tha boas ta sak
Wen tha tidlee's art ar bak.
We be westlen wile tes lite
But we ums et wen tes rite.

We be waaken arm en arm
Wen tha beer be like tha harm.
We be puten on tha piskees
Wot we oot t' oan tha weskeen.

We be neeren Sticker's plaat
Weer we soon well wep tha caat.
We can see tha plaas en site
Soa well wesh ee oll gud-nite.

According to Dunstan this was the traditional song of travelling tailors, or 'Whip the Cats'.

The Dialect here is definitely Mid or East Cornwall as the fourth verse contains 'we'em' for we are which would be 'weer' or the like in West Cornwall. Dunstan informs us that this song could be extended to any desired length and that a certain tailor being asked "Ow loang do an rekun We Be be?". The reply was "Wy bless ee, We Be be so loang az you mind fer en to be. I've a knawn un dree mile loang an wauns a braa passel o' vower." – a lovely example of Mid Cornwall Dialect.