

The Street Singer

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The man walked slowly down the centre of the street, the boy followed about five yards behind. The man was singing, "Oh play to me gypsy" at the top of his voice and turning to the left side and then the right side of the street, opening his arms out wide as he did so.

The boy sang and gestured likewise emulating the man's every move, he knew the words to the song, which at the age of three was something of an achievement. But the man was not amused. He was trying to make a living singing for money and resented the boy's intervention; besides the boy was getting more attention than he was and the people were laughing at him, or so he thought, but the people were laughing at the boy

The boy did not understand the value of money so he refused the pennies offered to him but accepted an orange, sweets and, oh yes, an egg'- he loved eggie dip-dip with soldiers. The man stopped, turned on the boy and yelled "get away from `ere you `orrible kid" . The boy did not understand this; he thought the people liked him but the man had frightened him - should he run! Aunt Bella was at her doorstep - surely she would not let the man hit him, so the boy kept on following the man.

The man was very angry by now so he turned on the boy and made to grab him. But the boy eluded his grasp and ran down the street as fast as his little legs could carry him. The man did not continue the chase but shouted after the boy "Go home you stupid kid you're not wanted `ere!"

The boy was confused. The words "not wanted" kept ringing in his ears. Those words were to have some significance in the not too distant future for the lad.

I know all this because I was the boy ... Keith Lloyd.