



Norma Waterson: English Folk Singing

"Green grows the laurel" – intro

NORMA WATERSON:

I'm going to start with a song called 'Green Grows the Laurel' and this is a song from Queen Caroline Hughes, a gypsy lady. She was collected an awful lot in the late sixties and seventies, she died in the mid-seventies. Because she was just an amazing singer, in that she did tell the story, she had the most incredible voice, when you listened to her you'd think it was a man, it was really deep. But that was because she smoked a pipe all the time and cigarettes all the time.

But she sat in her caravan and sang these songs and some of the songs hadn't been collected, orally collected. They were in manuscripts but they certainly hadn't been orally collected since Elizabethan times which is a big skip but Green Grow the Laurels was one of her heartbreaking songs that is about being pregnant if you're young and single and your parents throwing you out.

And the man who you're pregnant by just leaving you and the chorus is just
Green grow the laurels
Cold now blows the dew
Sorry was I
When I parted from you

It's just you know, the most evocative song. That's what I was going to sing, if I remembered the words.

it's a finger-wagging song.