

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

www.traditionalmusic.co.uk

O'Riley

O'Riley

O'Riley was a soldier, the finest in Company B.
In all the bloomin' regiment, no finer man than he.
He was the ranking Noncom. He knew his business well.
But ever since he tumbled down the pole*, O'Riley's gone to hell.

Cho: O'Riley's gone to hell, since down the pole he fell.
He drank up all the bug juice the whiskey man would sell.
They got him in the mill. They ran him through their still.
His bobtail's* coming back by mail. O'Riley's gone to hell.

O'Riley hit the bottle after six years up the pole.
He blew himself in Casey's place and then went in the hole.
He drank with all the rookies and shoved his face as well.
The whole unit's on the bum. O'Riley's gone to hell.

O'Riley stole a blanket and shoved it up I hear.
He shoved it for a dollar and invested it in beer.
He licked the coffee cooler* because he said he'd tell.
He's absent ten days without leave. O'Riley's gone to hell.

They'll try him by courts-martial. He'll never stand a chance,
To tell them how his mother died or some such song and dance.
You'll soon find him down in Battery Q* a-whilin' 'way the hours,
A big red P stamped on his back. O'Riley's gone to hell.

Words, traditional American, 19th century. Tune, traditional Irish

*Down the pole = off the wagon

*Bobtail = discharge

*Coffee cooler = goldbrick, yardbird

*Battery Q = guardhouse

XX