

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Riu Riu

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Cho: Riu, riu chiu	[nightingale sounds]
La guarda ribera	The river bank protects it
Dios guarde el lobo	
As God kept the wolf from our lamb.	
De nuestra cordera,	

El lobo rabioso	The rabid wolf tried to bite her
La quiso morder,	But God Almighty knew how to defend her.
Mas Dios poderso	He wished to create her impervious to sin
La supo defender,	Nor was this maid to embody original sin.

Quizole hazer que
No pudiesse pecar,
Ni aun original
Esta uirgen no tuuiera.

Ru, riu, etc.	Ru, riu, etc.
Este qu'es nascido	He who is born in the great King,
Es el gran monarca,	Christ, God made flesh.
Christo patriarcha	He has redeemed us by making
De carne uestido,	Himself as a child

Hanos redimido	Although everlasting, He made himself
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Con se hazer chiquito,	finite.
Aunque era infinito,	
Finito se hiezir.	

Riu, riu, etc.	Riu, riu, etc.
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Este uiene a dar	He comes to gve life to the dead
A los muertos uida,	He comes to redeem the fall of man;

Y uiene a reparar	This child is the light of day,
De todos la cayda,	He is the very lamb St John prophesied
Es la luz del dia	
Aqueste mocuelo,	
Este es el cordero	
Que San Juan dixera.	

Riu, riu, etc.

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"Riu Riu" was introduced by the old New York Pro Musica about 1954. Their arrangement is now a standard for many a cappella choirs, especially at Christmas season. The liner notes say the Spanish song was printed in a 1556 Venice collection and it's probably from the late 15th century. They use a 15th century Spanish pronunciation which sounds like Latin to unlettered me. It's a "villancico", a courtly development of a rustic style. The "villancico" survives, but only as this one, relating to the Nativity. AS

AJS