Swing Low, Sweet Chariot  
Sam Cook http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\_uk0XVt\_dpA (3:02)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Au-OI0ESvFY> (2:32)  
Karaoke – Johnny Cash <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyZ128zVEr4> (1:56)

"Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" was written before 1862 by [Wallis Willis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wallace_Willis), an African-American slave who lived on a plantation in Mississippi. When his owner, Brit Willis, a half-Choctaw man, left for the Trail of Tears — the route taken by Native Americans when the U.S. government ordered them to relocate to the West — he brought Wallis and his wife with him. Willis was inspired by the [Red River](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_River_(Mississippi_River)), which reminded him of the [Jordan River](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordan_River) and of the Prophet [Elijah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elijah)'s being taken to heaven by a chariot (2 Kings 2:11).

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| CHORUS Swing low, sweet chariot, Coming for to carry me home, Swing low, sweet chariot, Coming for to carry me home.  I looked over Jordan, and what did I see? Coming for to carry me home, A band of angels coming after me, Coming for to carry me home.  CHORUS  If you get there before I do, Coming for to carry me home, Tell all my friends I’m coming, too. Coming for to carry me home.  CHORUS  I’m sometimes up and sometimes down, Coming for to carry me home, But still my soul feels heavenly bound, Coming for to carry me home.  The brightest day that I can say, Coming for to carry me home, When Jesus washed my sins away, Coming for to carry me home. | chariot – usually horse-drawn carriage, often used in ancient wars  ‘carry me home’ – reference to dying and heaven  River Jordan - The river is important in the Old Testament because it is where the Jews crossed into the [Promised Land](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Promised_Land) and where Jesus [was baptised](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptism_of_Jesus)  up – happy  down – unhappy |

A minister at the Choctaw boarding school, heard Willis singing this song and wrote the words and melodies. He sent the music to the [Jubilee Singers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fisk_Jubilee_Singers) in [Nashville, Tennessee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nashville,_Tennessee). They popularized the songs during a tour of the United States and Europe.  
 Music historians say *Sweet Chariot*was actually a code slaves used to communicate about escaping to Canada. It was a song of hope that someone was going to help the slaves escape.

The song became popular again during the 1960s [Civil Rights](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_Rights) (Afro-Americans/blacks against the US government for rights as citizens) struggle and the [folk revival](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folk_revival); (when old songs from the past, ‘folk’ songs were revived – made to live again) - during this period was that by [Joan Baez](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joan_Baez) during the 1969 [Woodstock](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woodstock) festival.<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l4QcFFKABPw>

**Coded Songs and the Underground Railroad**http://www.manhattanbeachmusic.com/html/swing\_low.html

*Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* is considered to be a *code song* or *coded song,*and is one of a handful of spirituals that refer directly to the Underground Railroad. The Underground Railroad was neither a railroad nor underground, but was instead a loose and mysterious web of people and places serving the common goal of helping those bound by slavery to escape. Those fleeing slavery often moved northward from hiding place to hiding place under cover of darkness and disguise.

*Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* was a favorite spiritual of Harriet Tubman (1820*-*1913), who escaped from slavery in 1849 and is widely considered to be the most famous leader of the Underground Railroad, the Moses of those seeking freedom from slavery. In the 1850's she made many rescue trips into Maryland to help about 300 slaves escape to freedom.

Most of the code words in the spirituals refer to escape from slavery; the code words were used to hide the underlying, secret meaning of the lyrics. Coded songs were a way for slaves to share the dream of freedom openly with one another, drawing inspiration and hope from the texts. Without understanding the code, the lyrics appeared to have very different, nonthreatening meanings to the slaveholders.

The refrain and first verse of *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,* for example, might have been understood in the following ways:

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| LYRICS | LITERAL MEANING | "CODED," SECRET MEANING |
| ***Refrain:*** |  |  |
| Swing low, | Come down from above, | Come into the slaveholding states, |
| sweet chariot, | heavenly vehicle, | the "Underground Railroad," |
| Comin' for to carry me home... | Coming to take me to heaven... | Come to take me to freedom in the North or in Canada... |
| ***Verse One:*** |  |  |
| I looked over Jordan, and what did I see? | I looked over the *River Jordan*(in Biblical Israel), and what did I see? | I looked over the Mississippi River (or the Ohio River), and what did I see? (*"Jordan"*is the code word for the*Mississippi*or*Ohio* rivers.) |
| A band of angels | A group of angels | The workers of the Underground Railroad |
| 'comin after me... | coming to take me to heaven... | helping me to reach the North... |

In another interpretation of Swing Low, Sweet Chariot, the lyrics are thought to be a coded reference to the southern Ohio town of Ripley, one of the earliest and busiest "stations" or "depots" of the Underground Railroad. Ripley was the home of John Parker (1827*-*1900), an abolitionist, former slave, and successful industrialist. John Parker was also a "conductor" on the Underground Railroad. To reach the town of Ripley, which sits atop a hill by the Ohio River, fugitive slaves had to wait for help coming from the hill. This scene corresponds to the lyrics that refer to a "band of angels coming across the Jordan River to carry me home."

***Amazing Grace***

* Robeson Amazing Grace <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1lSMXE3W8w> (3:39)
* Elvis Presley <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3XdXEJEI4E> (3:37)
* Michael Jackson <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZVX7F_H5b0> (to 3:00)
* Whitney Huston (video not so good) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jvJ2wpnXzE>

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Amazing grace! How sweet the sound That saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found; Was blind, but now I see.  ’Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears relieved; How precious did that grace appear The hour I first believed.  Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come; ’Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home.  The Lord has promised good to me, His Word my hope secures; He will my Shield and Portion be, As long as life endures.  Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail, And mortal life shall cease, I shall possess, within the veil, A life of joy and peace.  The earth shall soon dissolve like snow, The sun forbear to shine; But God, who called me here below, Will be forever mine.  When we’ve been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun, We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise Than when we’d first begun. | grace – gift from God wretch – terrible person, destroyed  lost – moved far from good blind – cannot see  relieved – freed from pain  precious – important and valuable  toils – old word for ‘work’ snares – s.t. used to trap (often animals)  hath – Biblical/old word for ‘has’  secures – make safe shield – round or other shaped object of wood or metal to protect a person in battle  portion – old fashioned, refers to ‘part of food given’ here it means my life  endures – continues  mortal – s.t. that dies  within the veil - from the veil in the Temple at Jerusalem, which separated the holy area, where only the high priest could go = heaven  dissolve – to disappear in water forbear – hold back  This is not grammatical. It should be "when we began". This refers to souls’ eternal life in heaven. After ten thousand years, there will literally be as much time left (an infinite amount) as when people first were born. |

* Hayley Westenra <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRRzgQK5cIQ>  
  Karaoke (with singer) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3G72NucLEGM>  
  Judy Collins Karaoke <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9SHpplXEuOA>  
  Bagpipes only w/photos of Scotland <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M8AeV8Jbx6M>

Amazing Grace" is a Christian song with words written by the English poet and clergyman [JohnNewton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Newton)  (1725–1807), published in 1779. The message is that forgiveness and salvation are possible no matter what sins a person did. Additionally, the song shows how God’s mercy can save a soul from despair.

Newton wrote the words from personal experience. He became involved in the [Atlantic slave trade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlantic_slave_trade). In 1748, a violent storm happened and he called out to God for mercy, a moment that marked [his spiritual conversion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Newton#Spiritual_conversion). However, he continued his slave trading career until 1754 or 1755.

Later, he became a minister in the [Church of England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_England).  "Amazing Grace" was written for a sermon on New Year's Day of 1773 and was later published but then forgotten. In the United States however, it was often sung in the early 19th century. It is "without a doubt the most famous of all the folk hymns," and it has been estimated that it is performed about 10 million times yearly. It has become an [African American spiritual](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negro_spiritual). It became popular again in the United States in the 1960s, and has been recorded thousands of times since then. It is often played or sung at funerals.

The song has old-fashioned wording, and sometimes the sentences are not in correct word order so the ends of the lines rhyme.

**"Happy"**

Pharrell Williams - Happy (Official Music Video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6Sxv-sUYtM>  
karaoke <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ocu2UFN1nmU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-GLuydiMe4>

“Happy” was released on November 21, 2013 and is a [neo soul](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neo_soul) and [funk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Funk) song. The song has been highly successful, peaking at number one in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and 19 other countries. It has sold over 5.6 million copies in the United Statesand over 1.65 million copies in the United Kingdom. With worldwide sales of 10 million copies,[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Happy_(Pharrell_Williams_song)#cite_note-6) it has become one of the [best-selling singles of all time](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_best-selling_singles).

Neo-soul (‘neo’ means ‘new’) is a combination of two kinds of music: rhythm and blues, R&B, which is African-American music that originated in the 1940s; and soul, a popular [music genre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music_genre) that started in the United States in the 1950s and early 1960s. Soul combined elements of [African-American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African-American_culture) [gospel music](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_music), [rhythm and blues](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhythm_and_blues), and often [jazz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jazz).

Blues is a [musical form](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musical_form) that began in [African-American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African-American) communities in the "[Deep South](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deep_South)" of the US. It is related to the religious music of Afro-American [spirituals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_(music)). The first appearance of this music is often dated to after [emancipation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abolitionism_in_the_United_States) when President Abraham Lincoln freed (emancipated) the slaves in 1863. It is associated with the newly acquired freedom of the enslaved people.

“The blues” was a word meaning being sad or depressed. Some people say the name came from West African cultures which used indigo, a blue dye, on their clothes to show suffering when a loved one died. The [indigo plant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indigofera_tinctoria) was also grown in many southern U.S. slave plantations. West African slaves sang of their suffering as they picked cotton so that, eventually, the songs became known as "the Blues."

Funk is a [music genre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music_genre) that originated in the mid to late[1960s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1960s_in_music) when [African-American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African-American) musicians created a [rhythmic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhythmic), [danceable](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dance) new form of music through a mixture of [soul music](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soul_music), [jazz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jazz), and [R&B](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhythm_and_blues).

*[Verse 1:]*  
It might seem crazy what I'm about to say  
Sunshine she's here, you can take a break  
I'm a hot air balloon that could go to space  
With the air, like I don't care baby by the way  
{Uh}  
*[Chorus:]*  
Because I'm happy / Clap along if you feel like a room without a roof  
Because I'm happy / Clap along if you feel like happiness is the truth  
Because I'm happy / Clap along if you know what happiness is to you  
Because I'm happy  
Clap along if you feel like that's what you wanna do  
*[Verse 2:]*  
Here come bad news talking this and that, yeah,  
Well, give me all you got, and don't hold it back, yeah,  
Well, I should probably warn you I'll be just fine, yeah,  
No offense to you, don't waste your time  
Here's why / *[Chorus]*  
{Hey / Go / Uh}  
(Happy) / Bring me down  
Can't nothing / Bring me / down  
My level's too high / Bring me down  
Can't nothing / Bring me down  
I said (let me tell you now)  
Bring me down / Can't nothing  
Bring me down /My level's too high  
Bring me down / Can't nothing / Bring me down  
I said / *[Chorus x2]*  
{Hey / Go / Uh}

(Happy) *[repeats]*