

Dan, Dan The Dirty Man

Traditional
Additional parts Michael Gallgher

C Am Am C G7 F Dm G

Dan Dan the dir - ty man washedhis face in a frying pan

Dan Dan Oh! Why did you leave me all those man - y years a go?

Oh Mother No moth er Stop! Don't smoth er me That's why I wand - ered off as a swagman.

I'm Dan Dan the dir ty man I wash my face in a frying pan I

6 C Am C G G7 C

6 combed his hair with the leg of a chair and told his moth er he did - n't care.

6 Come back — to me and I will care for you feed you wash you white as snow.

6 I wont let you fuss and boss and cod - dle me, I am - a swag man! That's what I am!

6 comb my hair with the leg of a chair and I tell my moth er I do not care.

Performance

- 1, Narrator's song
2. Mother's plea
3. Dan's response and song
4. 1. Narrator, 2. Mother and 3. Dan together

Dan, Dan the Dirty Man

Narrator

Dan, Dan the dirty man
Washed his face in a frying pan
Combed his hair with the leg of a chair
And told his mother he didn't care

Mother

Dan, Dan why did you leave me
All those many years ago?
Come back to me and I will care for you
Feed you, wash you white as snow.

Dan

Oh mother! No mother! Stop! Don't smother me!
That's why I wandered off as a swagman.
I won't let you fuss and boss and coddle me
I am a swagman! That's what I am.

I'm Dan, Dan the dirty man
I wash my face in a frying pan
I comb my hair with the leg of a chair
And I tell my mother I do not care

Dad was a stock and station agent. On sale days, (sheep on Mondays and cattle on Tuesdays), he worked at the Bendigo sale yards as an auctioneer. One of the hoolers, a man who assisted with the movement of animals around the yards, happened to be called Dan. As a young child, I was sure this song was about Dan the hooler, and I remember thinking how daring he was to tell his mother he didn't care.

As a seventeen year old, long before he worked at the yards, Dad was a clerk in a Bendigo gold mine. When the mine closed down, he was offered a continuing job with the company in Cobar. He was all set to take it up and had been farewelled by his friends, but at the last minute, his mother "*turned on the water works**" and he chose not to go.

Is that why he sung this song with such vigour?

Dad sang the narrator's part. Recently, I was pleased to "discover" three new parts. The original is now joined by his mothers plea and Dan's responses. Three singers could have some fun presenting these parts, and with practice, singing them in parallel.

Source:

As sung by Brendan Gallagher. Additional verses by Michael Gallagher.

The song appears to be derived from the American folksong: *Dan Tucker*, who washed his face in a frying pan, combed his hair with a wagon wheel and did various other preposterous things. I do not know when or from where Dad got his version.

*Dad's words to my mother, then Aylene Fitzpatrick, aged 16.