

Eyder Ikh Leyg Zikh Shlofn

(sung by the Golden Thread Ensemble as Ayder Ikh Layg Mikh Shlufn)

Lament of the seamstress published in 1912 by Y. L. Cahan. This is one of the workers' folksongs that Cahan designated as part of the older folksong repertoire, in which the singer is an individual, rather than the collective "we" of later workers' songs

Eyder ikh leyg zikh shlofn,
Darf ikh shoyn oyfshteyn,
Mit mayne kranke beyner
Tsu der arbet geyn.

By the time I can lie down to sleep,
I have to get up, already,
with my sick bones
to go to work.

Refrain:

Tsu got vel ikh veynen
Mit a groys geveyn:
Tsu vos ikh bin geboyrn
A neytorin tsu zayn

I will weep before God
with a great cry:
"Why was I born
to be a seamstress?"

Kh'kum shpet tsu der arbet,
S'iz vayt der veg,
Shlogt men mir op
Far halbe teg.

I come to work late,
it's a long way,
they dock my wages
for half a day.

Nodlen vern tsebrokhn
Fuftsn a minut,
Di finger vern tseshtokhn,
S'rint fun zey dos blut.

Needles break,
fifteen a minute,
stabbing my fingers
until the blood runs from them.

Ikh layd shtendik hunger,
Kh'hob nisht vos tsu esn,
Vil ikh gelt betn,
Heyst men mir fargesn.

I suffer from hunger, constantly,
I have nothing to eat.
When I ask for money,
they tell me to forget it.