

Three Little Fishes (Itty Bitty Poo)

Southern children's song written in 1939 by Josephine Judson Carringer
lyrics and music adapted by Saxie Dowell,
#1 hit in 1939 by the Kay Kyser orchestra (sung by Ish KaBibble)
Also covered by Andrews Sisters and Madona
Can be sung in English or Fish!

G G7 C D7
Down in the meadow in a little bitty pool
G G7 C D7
Swam three little fishies and a mama fishie too
G G7 C C#7
"Swim" said the mama fishie, "Swim if you can"
 D7 C7 D7 G
And they swam and they swam all over the dam

Boop boop dit-tem dat-tem what-tem Chu!
Boop boop dit-tem dat-tem what-tem Chu!
Boop boop dit-tem dat-tem what-tem Chu!
And they swam and they swam all over the dam

Down in de meddy in a itty bitty poo,
Fam fee itty fitty and a mama fitty, foo.
"Fim," fed de mama fitty, "fim if oo tan,"
And dey fam and dey fam all over de dam.
Boop boop dit-tem dat-tem what-tem Chu!
Boop boop dit-tem dat-tem what-tem Chu!
Boop boop dit-tem dat-tem what-tem Chu!
And dey fam all over de dam.

"Stop" said the mama fishie, "or you will get lost"
The three little fishies didn't wanna be bossed
The three little fishies went off on a spree
And they swam and they swam right out to the sea

Boop boop dit-tem dat-tem what-tem Chu!
Boop boop dit-tem dat-tem what-tem Chu!
Boop boop dit-tem dat-tem what-tem Chu!
And they swam and they swam right out to the sea

"Wheel!" yelled the little fishies, "Here's a lot of fun
We'll swim in the sea till the day is done"
They swam and they swam, and it was a lark
Till all of a sudden they saw a shark!

Boop boop dit-tem dat-tem what-tem Chu!
Boop boop dit-tem dat-tem what-tem Chu!
Boop boop dit-tem dat-tem what-tem Chu!
Till all of a sudden they saw a shark!

"Help!" cried the little fishies, "Gee! look at all the
whales!"
And quick as they could, they turned on their tails
And back to the pool in the meadow they swam
And they swam and they swam back over the dam

Boop boop dit-tem dat-tem what-tem Chu!
Boop boop dit-tem dat-tem what-tem Chu!
Boop boop dit-tem dat-tem what-tem Chu!
And they swam and they swam back over the dam.

The song, now in public domain, was written in 1939 by Josephine Judson Carringer. We read the following about her at <http://familytreemaker.genealogy.com/users/w/a/r/Robert-Warren/GENE1-0067.html>

She had hazel eyes and brown hair. She was musically gifted and highly intelligent. She started college when she was 16 yrs old. She wrote the song "Three Little Fishes" with Betty Lynn Kirk, her sorority sister at the University of Tennessee in the late 1930s. They sold the song for \$200.

Actually Kay Keyser didn't do the singing. It was one of his horn players that came down and did Novelty tunes from time to time. He went by the name of Ish KaBibble.

Kay Keyser made it a hit in 1939.

Title: THREE LITTLE FISHIES

Title: Itty bitty poo

Composer: Dowell, Saxie

Name: Hal Kemp

Role: P

Publisher: Santly-Joy-Select Inc.

Place of publication: New York

Date of publication: 1939

Call Number: M1 .D48 Box: 086 Item: 081

Performance Medium: Piano, Voice and Chords

First Line: Down in de meddy in a itty bitty poo, fam fee itty fitty

A few more lines copied from [http://shadowstar.ymakadomain.com/bards/unknown.htm](http://shadowstar.yimakadomain.com/bards/unknown.htm):

Down in de meddy in a itty bitty poo,
Fam fee itty fitty and a mama fitty, foo.
"Fim," fed de mama fitty, "fim if oo tan,"
And dey fam and dey fam all over de dam.
Boop boop dit-tem dat-tem what-tem Chu!
Boop boop dit-tem dat-tem what-tem Chu!
Boop boop dit-tem dat-tem what-tem Chu!
And dey fam all over de dam.

Saxie Dowell is a great big fat man with a little mustache, like Paul Whiteman's. He sang duets with his mother in a North Carolina church choir when he was eight. At the University of North Carolina he played a saxophone, was one of the first members of Hal Kemp's college dance orchestra. Still with the same band, and now its chief comic, Saxie Dowell recently heard, in the South, an old nursery tune called Down in de Meddy. He thought it mighty cute.

Aware that nursery songs like A-Tisket, A-Tasket and Stop Beatin' 'Round the Mulberry Bush were raging furiously among jazz musicians, Saxie Dowell fixed up the Southern song with some new verses, some boop-boops, a two-bar tune, repeated (with little variation) eight times. The result was published last April by Santly-Joy-Select, Inc., which got out The Music Goes 'Round and 'Round and admits to liking "crazy things." Under its title Three Little Fishies, Saxie Dowell's song last week had set something of a current record by leading the field in sheet music sales for a month.

Three Little Fishies has verses which can be sung either in English (Down in the meadow in a little bitty pool) or in "fish talk" (Down in de meddy in a ITTY BITTY POO). The chorus can be sung only one way: Boop boop dittem dattem whattem Chu! The song, likely to cause reverse peristalsis in fastidious stomachs, is all about some "itty fitties" who "fam and dey fam" until they "taw a TARK!" (shark). Den dey fam back to deir poo. The publishers, wary of overplugging Three Little Fishies, withheld it from all but a few big orchestral names—Hal Kemp, Guy Lombardo, Kay Kyser, Paul Whiteman, each of whom recorded it. The song was plugged on the radio by Mildred Bailey, Fannie Brice, Judy Starr. Along with the itty fitties, fat Saxie Dowell fam into such fame that he is now thinking of leaving Hal Kemp and starting a band of his own