

Golden slumbers kiss your eyes,
Smiles awake you when you rise:
Sleep pretty wantons do not cry,
And I will sing a lullaby,
Rock them rock them lullaby.

Care is heavy therefore sleep you,
You are care and care must keep you:
Sleep pretty wantons do not cry,
And I will sing a lullaby,
Rock them rock them lullaby.

Thomas Dekker
(1572 – 1632)



Thomas Dekker lying in bed

The playwright Thomas Dekker lived in London, and his pamphlet *The Wonderful Yeare* describes the city during the terrible plague of 1603. In the same year he wrote *Patient Grissil*, the play from which our lullaby comes. It has been set by several composers, including, in the 20th century, Peter Warlock and Paul McCartney (it was recorded by The Beatles on *Abbey Road*).

More famous plays by Dekker include *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, *The Witch of Edmonton*, *Westward Hoe* and *The Roaring Girl*.

Dekker's work is enjoyed for its realistic and vivid portrayal of London life, for its sympathy with the poor and oppressed, including animals tortured for man's amusement, and for its prevailing cheerfulness.

He suffered from poverty, and was several times imprisoned for debt, for a period of nearly seven years. Despite this, he is remembered for his cheerful and good-natured temperament.