



Follow the Drinking Gourd

This old African-American spiritual, known as a “coded” song, was used to deliver a message to those held in bondage. The lyrics are full of codes to help those seeking freedom to find their way north. For example, the “Drinking Gourd” is actually the Big Dipper, which points to the North Star.

Melody and Lyrics by Anonymous

♩ = 96 Capo 3

E min *Chorus* *B min* *E min*

Voice *mf* Fol-low the drink - ing gourd! — Fol-low the

Piano *mf*

4 *B min* *D* *E min* *B min* *A*

drink-ing gourd. — For the old man is a-wait-ing for to car-ry you to free-dom If you

7 *B min* *F# min* *B min* *Fine* *Verse* *B min*

fol-low the drink - ing gourd. When the sun comes back, and the first quail calls, —

Fine *mp*

mp



11 *E min* *B min* *D* *E min*

Fo-low the drink - ing gourd. — For the old man is a - wait - ing for to

14 *B min* *A* *B min* *F# min* *B min* *D.C. al Fine*

car - ry you to free - dom If you fol - low the drink - ing gourd.

D.C. al Fine

2. The riverbank makes a very good road,
The dead trees will show you the way.
Left foot, peg foot, traveling on,
Follow the drinking gourd.
Chorus
3. The river ends between two hills,
Follow the drinking gourd.
There's another river on the other side,
Follow the drinking gourd,
Chorus
4. When the great big river meets the little river,
Follow the drinking gourd.
For the old man is a-waiting for
to carry you to freedom
If you follow the drinking gourd.
Chorus

