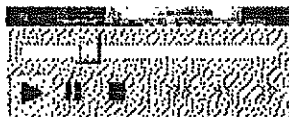


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## Big Rock Candy Mountains



(by Harry "Haywire Mac" McClintock; copyrighted)

**IMPORTANT REMINDERS ABOUT THE LYRICS:** Mr. McClintock's song was written from the outdated perspectives and manner of speech common many years ago (in the 1920's), with the intention of humorously portraying an imaginary place for people living "on the road". But please remember that being unemployed and homeless are very difficult situations for anyone to face! Visit [HUD's Help the Homeless Children's website](#) to learn more about how YOU can help!



In addition, smoking and alcohol addictions are extremely harmful to your health; and no situation will be improved by having easy access to cigarettes or alcohol, as promised in the fictional (and extremely unhealthy!) Big Rock Candy Mountains.

And speaking of candy, please also visit [Obesity and Your Environment](#) and [My Food My World!](#)

On a summer day in the month of May a burly bum came hiking  
 Down a shady lane through the sugar cane, he was looking for his liking.  
 As he roamed along he sang a song of the land of milk and honey  
 Where a bum can stay for many a day, and he won't need any money

Oh the buzzin' of the bees in the cigarette trees near the soda water fountain,  
 At the lemonade springs where the bluebird sings on the Big Rock Candy Mountains

There's a lake of gin we can both jump in, and the handouts grow on bushes  
 In the new-mown hay we can sleep all day, and the bars all have free lunches  
 Where the mail train stops and there ain't no cops, and the folks are tender-hearted  
 Where you never change your socks and you never throw rocks,  
 And your hair is never parted

Oh the buzzin' of the bees in the cigarette trees near the soda water fountain,  
 At the lemonade springs where the bluebird sings on the Big Rock Candy Mountains

Oh, a farmer and his son, they were on the run, to the hay field they were bounding  
 Said the bum to the son, "Why don't you come to the big rock candy mountains?"  
 So the very next day they hiked away, the mileposts they were counting  
 But they never arrived at the lemonade tide, on the Big Rock Candy Mountains

Oh the buzzin' of the bees in the cigarette trees near the soda water fountain,  
 At the lemonade springs where the bluebird sings on the Big Rock Candy Mountains

One evening as the sun went down and the jungle fires were burning,  
 Down the track came a hobo hiking, and he said "Boys, I'm not turning."

"I'm heading for a land that's far away beside the crystal fountains;"  
 "So come with me, we'll go and see the Big Rock Candy Mountains."

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains, there's a land that's fair and bright,  
 The handouts grow on bushes and you sleep out every night  
 Where the boxcars all are empty and the sun shines every day  
 On the birds and the bees and the cigarette trees,  
 The lemonade springs where the bluebird sings  
 In the Big Rock Candy Mountains

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains, all the cops have wooden legs  
 And the bulldogs all have rubber teeth and the hens lay soft-boiled eggs  
 The farmer's trees are full of fruit and the barns are full of hay  
 Oh I'm bound to go where there ain't no snow  
 Where the rain don't fall, the wind don't blow  
 In the Big Rock Candy Mountains

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains, you never change your socks  
 And little streams of alcohol come a-trickling down the rocks  
 The brakemen have to tip their hats and the railroad bulls are blind  
 There's a lake of stew and of whiskey too  
 And you can paddle all around 'em in a big canoe  
 In the Big Rock Candy Mountains

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains the jails are made of tin,  
 And you can walk right out again as soon as you are in  
 There ain't no short-handled shovels, no axes, saws or picks,  
 I'm a-goin' to stay where you sleep all day  
 Where they hung the jerk that invented work  
 In the Big Rock Candy Mountains

I'll see you all this comin' fall in the Big Rock Candy Mountains!

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 The song was first recorded in 1928 by Harry McClintock, also known as Haywire Mac. The Haywire Mac version peaked at #1 in 1939 country music charts printed by Billboard magazine. It is probably best remembered for its recording by Burl Ives in 1949, but it has been recorded by many artists throughout the world. A version recorded in 1960 by Dorsey Burnette reached #102 in Billboard, the biggest success for the song in the post-1954 "rock era".

Before recording the song, McClintock cleaned it up considerably from the version he sang as a street busker in 1897. Originally the song described a child being recruited into hobo life by tales of the "big rock candy mountain". Such recruitment actually occurred, with hobos enchanting children with tales of adventure called ghost stories by other hobos. In proof of his authorship of the song, McClintock published the original words, the last stanza of which was:

*The punk rolled up his big blue eyes  
 And said to the jockey, "Sandy,  
 I've hiked and hiked and wandered too,  
 But I ain't seen any candy.  
 I've hiked and hiked till my feet are sore  
 And I'll be damned if I hike any more  
 To be huggered sore like a hobo's whore  
 In the Big Rock Candy Mountains."*

In the released version this verse did not appear. Sanitized versions have been popular, especially with children's musicians; in these, the "cigarette trees" become peppermint trees, and the "streams of alcohol" trickling down the rocks become streams of lemonade. The lake of gin is not mentioned, and the lake of whiskey becomes a lake of soda pop. The 2008 extended adaptation for children by Gil McLachlan tells the story as a child's dream, the last stanza being:

*In the Big Rock Candy Mountains you're going on a holiday  
 Your birthday comes around once a week and it's Christmas every day  
 You never have to clean your room or put your toys away*