

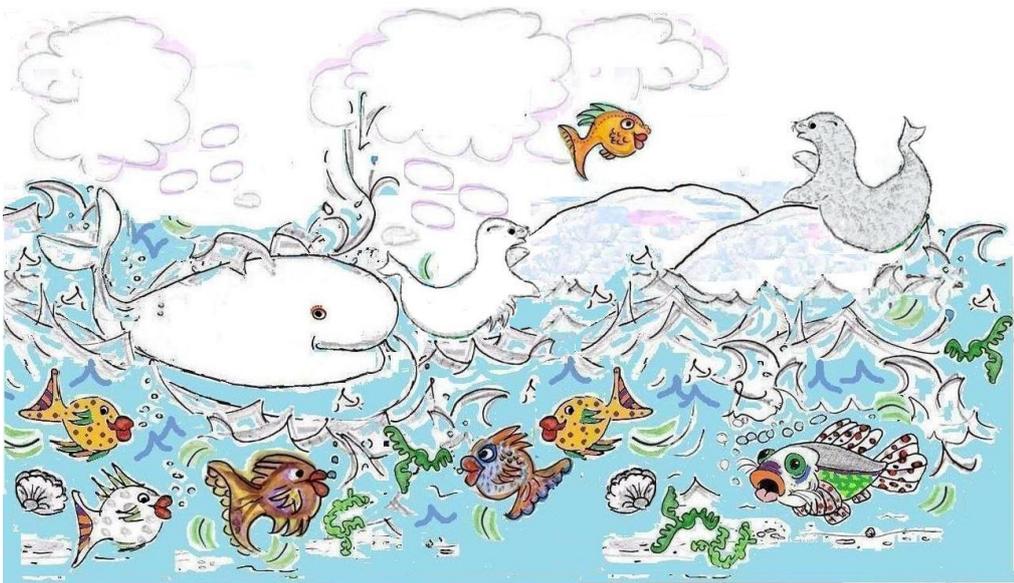
# The Great Silkie of Sule Skerry

<https://riverofsong.uk/>

Another lullaby from my 1960s notebook.

There are numerous tales of the 'Silkies' or seafolk known to those who live on the Orkney Islands and the Hebrides off the Scottish coast. These enchanted creatures live way under the sea but will remove their sealskins to appear on land in human form. Nourris - nurse - a woman who is employed to suckle a small child - lily wean - lovely child, ken - know, grumbly = troubled, frae - from Child ballad 113. Find out more at: <https://mainlynorfolk.info/steeleye.span/songs/greatsilkieofsuleskerry.html>

The musical score is written on three staves in 3/4 time. The lyrics are: "An earth - ly nour - ris sits and sings, And aye, she sings by li - ly wean, And lit - tle ken I my bairn's fath - er, Far less the land where he dwells in." The chords are: G, F, G, F, Am, G, C, G, F, G, F, Am, Dm, G, F, G.



An earthly nourris sits and sings,  
And aye she sings by lily wean.  
“And little ken I my bairns father,  
Far less the land where he dwells in.”

He came one night to her bed feet,  
And a grumbly guest, I'm sure was he,  
Saying, “Here am I the bairns father,  
Although I be not fair to see.”

“I am a man upon the land,  
I am a silkie on the sea,  
And when I'm far, far frae the land,  
My home it is in Sulze Skerry.”

He's taken out a purse of gold,  
And placed it on the mother's knee.  
Saying, “Give to me my little young son,  
And take thee up thy nurses fee.”

“It shall come to pass one summer's day,  
When the sun shines bright on every stone,  
I'll come and fetch my little young son,  
And teach him how to swim the foam.”

“And you will wed a gunner good,  
A right fine gunner I'm sure he'll be,  
And the very first shot that e'er he fires  
Will kill both my young babe and me.”