

Story 1594 (1987 Tape 4)

Narrator: Recep Yumurtacı, 80

Location: Bılık village,
Devrek kaza,
Zonguldak Province

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Tekerleme¹

Once there was and once there wasn't, when my mother was on the threshold and my father was rocking in his cradle tingir mungir.² Back there at that time I was thirteen years old. Standing beneath a pine tree that had just begun to grow, I shot a rabbit with a gun that had no trigger.

¹A tekerleme is a nonsensical sequence of rimed paradoxes that often serves as an introduction to a folktale. Most tekerlemes are all but impossible to translate effectively into another language. The built-in euphony and vowel harmony of the Turkish language are absent from most languages, and there is no way in which their effect can be readily duplicated. The tekerleme has three functions: it amuses the audience; it alerts them to the fact that a folktale is about to be told, and it sharpens their wits to readiness to appreciate a good folktale.

This is not a very satisfactory tekerleme, for it is very brief. Often the tekerleme is a tour de force that continues to twice or thrice the length of this one. This one is not really functional, for it is not followed by a folktale. It is included in ATON as one more source of motifs that one may find in functional formulaic openings of Turkish folktales.

²Onomatopoeia for the sound of a rocking cradle.