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Down the way, where the nights are gay
 And the sun shines daily on the mountain top
 I took a trip on a sailing ship
 And when I reached Jamaica, I made a stop

② Chorus

But I'm sad to say, I'm on my way,
 Won't be back for many a day,
 My heart is down, my head is turning around
 I had to leave a little girl in Kingston town



Jamaica Farewell

by Lord Burgess

③

Sounds of laughter everywhere
 And the dancing girls sway to and fro,
 I must declare, my heart is there,
 'Though I've been from Maine to Mexico

Repeat Chorus

Down at the market, you can hear
 Ladies cry out while on their heads they bear
 Ackee, rice, salt fish are nice,
 And the rum is fine any time of year

Chorus

Irving Burgie was born in Brooklyn in 1924. His mother was from Barbados, and he grew up surrounded by people from the Caribbean. After serving in the Army during World War II, Burgie studied music at Julliard, the University of Arizona and the University of Southern California. He was influenced by the folk music revival that was sweeping the country and began performing and writing songs. During the early 1950s, he appeared at the Blue Angel in Chicago and the Village Vanguard in New York, where he worked for a period with Louise Bennett, a writer and interpreter of Jamaican folk traditions. It was during this period that he assumed the name "Lord Burgess."

Burgie is best known as a songwriter. Some of his compositions, such as "Jamaica Farewell" and "Day-O," were based, in part, on Jamaican folk traditions. In 1955 he met Harry Belafonte and provided him with "Day-O" and other songs for a performance in "Holiday in Trinidad," a segment on NBC's Colgate Comedy Hour. The next year, Belafonte included "Day-O," "Jamaica Farewell" and other Burgie compositions in his immensely successful album titled Calypso. Burgie went on to write other songs for Belafonte, such as "Island in the Sun," which was the title song for a 1957 movie that starred Belafonte. He also wrote the music for an Off-Broadway musical titled Ballad for Bimshire (1963) and composed the national anthem for Barbados, which gained independence from Britain in 1966.

