Spoken Mixtec has three phonemic registers, high, mid, low. In attempting to record this song, it appeared that three sung registers could record it also, allowing for tonal perturbations similar to the non-phonemic variety in speech. Significant perturbations also occurred, caused by the melody.

Finals: Melody pattern, sustained middle to sustained low: This is of stanza final. Phrase final tends to vary from it. (In all sample numbers of lines given below, italicization implies that the perturbation of the speech tone is very apparent. In other instances, either the words are not parallel in the spoken story, and hence do not show clearly, or else one cannot be too sure whether or not melody has caused change.) Examples of this—

Stanza Final: 5d, 6d, 7d. In 1a, the interjection is outside the pattern; 2d, is rather like phrase final than stanza final; 3d, the high start on final mora is due to the text tone; 4d, the final melody must be on last morpheme, hence here on a single mora which receives both glide and sustained element.

Phrase Final, preceding pause; mid to sustained low: 2a, 2b, 3a, 3c, 4b, 5b, 6a, 6b, 7a, 7b, 7c.

Phrase Final, without full pause following it, either like that preceding pause, 2c, 4a, or with penultimate mora on the same pitch as the final sustained one. 4c, 6c. 1a and 1b final single mora morpheme sustained. 1c, the pattern high to mid in speech equals that of low low, hence fits the pattern here; 5a unsustained, reason: 5c text interference.

Phrase Introductions: Melody always steps up in pitch within the first few syllables of the phrase, usually on the second or third mora, but once on the fourth 4a, and once the fifth 6a, apparently without relation to the speech tones, over which the melody consistently triumphs, e.g. 1c, 4d, 5a.

Abstract of data presented to a meeting of the Linguistic Society of America, July 27, 1939.
The Flea

Phrase Centers: Tendency to be on a high pitch monotone. This, plus initial rising melody, and final fall, gives the basic melody, as seen in 2a, 4a, 4b, 5a, 5d, 6a, 6b, 7a. This often involves changing of text tone, as seen in phrases italicized. In 1a the center is as stated, but final has text tone interference. There is a sub-pattern where the next to last morpheme steps down to mid mid, as in 4d, 7b, 7c.

Weaknesses in Phrase Centers: A pivot point seems often to cut the phrase in two, where between the two sections there is a step down actualized by one or more syllables which seem to serve as falling final of first section and preparation for step up of second section. That these are not due to the speech tones may be seen in 1b and 1c, as well as others italicized here. 3b an artificial pause due to catch in throat, after which melody begins anew; 1a and 3a have first section again subdivided on a similar plan; 4c not clear, but possible speech tone compromise (it would be considered the latter were it not that speech tone so often is changed by pivot melody, that here we judge it just a coincidence); 5b, rise expected on [namal] counterbalanced by closeness to falling melody; 5c, pivot melody in between sections, with text interference in middle of section two; 6c, not clear evidence; 7d; 2c, perhaps speech tone here, but a difficult place to transcribe from the phonograph record, since if glides are present, they are reduced to very short ones.

Occasionally the pivot point is actualized by a step up, only, to high, when the first section or its latter part were mid. (Probably these could not occur when the first section was high, else it would bring in an impermissible fourth register.) 2b, 3b and 3d; 3c, 6d. Sub-pattern with next to last morpheme mid mid, 2d, 6a.

Changes of Melody by Speech Tones: Three times by Spanish loans, 1c, 2c, 3d (final mora starts high before glide).

Only one clear instance of interference of speech tones. In 5c, [siko]; compare 3c, the same word, where it does not influence the melody but on the contrary is perturbed by it.

A number of times there is possible text interference, at pivot points, as mentioned above, but these are probably mere coincidences, since no clear cases are present where a contrasting text tone remains, but many where, on the contrary, they are perturbed. See paragraph above on weaknesses in phrase centers.
Length of Phrases: Very uneven; 7 to 15 moras; average 10.25.

Conclusion: The melody of the song is: a rise, high level, then falling sustained tones. The melody has various sub-patterns which are inherent in itself, not caused by text tone interference. Strangely enough, Spanish loans are more apt to affect the melody than are the native words.

Symbols:

['] high tone
[-] or zero, mid tone
[.] low tone
[ ] sustained
[ ] pause
[ ] phrase transition without pause
[ ] indication of spoken words differing from song and preventing demonstration of tone parallel

Song form in first line of each group; speech form in second line.

1a
vái-ri káta-ri nú ámigó-ri: |"' "' ' ' ': |
vái-ri kata-ri nú ámigó-ri |"-- "' "' |
I come to sing to my friend

1b
Án tándó'o ni tána-ri: | "- '- '- |
ÁÁn tándó'o ni ta?á-n-ri | "-'- ' |
a misfortune I met

1c
ini Áán korredór yá?a: | "'- ' ' ' |
ini ÁÁn korredó'or yá?a |"-- ' ' ' |
in a corridor here

1d
ÁÁn táyo?o ni túú ru:ú: | áí:|| "- '- '- '; ': 
ÁÁn táyo?ó ni tuu ruú | "'- ' -' |
a flea stabbed me, oh!

2a
ni 'dá?A ñúú ni kájiní:|| "' ' ' ' ' ' |
ni(i) ká jíni tàká ñúú |.............
every town knew
The Flea

2b
\[
\begin{align*}
t \text{e ni ka } & \text{nda tú?ù:} \\
t \text{e ni ka } & \text{nda tūhùn} \\
\text{and they discussed}
\end{align*}
\]

2c
\[
\begin{align*}
t \text{e ni kaja uù miil bálasù-:} \\
(x) \text{ ni já?} \text{a uù miil bálasò-tlà} \\
\text{and hit (him) two thousand bullets}
\end{align*}
\]

2d
\[
\begin{align*}
t \text{e ni ja} \text{?ni luégó tiyo?o ya?à:} \\
t \text{e ni ki?in ni kà ja?nì-tà} \\
\text{(in the story line } x \text{ appears here)} \\
t \text{e ni ji?ì-tà} \\
\text{and killed immediately flea this.}
\end{align*}
\]

3a
\[
\begin{align*}
t \text{e ni kà kì ku?ù: } (?) \text{ táyo?o ya?à:} \\
t \text{e ni kà ki?in-de kùnu-tà táyo?o yá?a} \\
\text{and they took the flesh of the flea this}
\end{align*}
\]

3b
\[
\begin{align*}
t \text{e ni } & \text{kà sà?a sàrsinà:} \\
t \text{e ni kà já sà?a-de sàrsinà} \\
\text{and they made meat preparation}
\end{align*}
\]

3c
\[
\begin{align*}
t \text{e ni kajà šikó`:} \\
t \text{e ni kajà šikó-de} \\
\text{and went to sell}
\end{align*}
\]

3d
\[
\begin{align*}
nù yà?u kòlimá: \\
\text{siudà} \text{a kolimá} \\
\text{in market Colima}
\end{align*}
\]

4a
\[
\begin{align*}
t \text{e jítí tiyó?ò yá?a:} \\
t \text{ee jítí tiyó?ò yá?a} \\
\text{and viscera (of) flea this}
\end{align*}
\]

4b
\[
\begin{align*}
ni \text{ ka kì ni kà síngoyò:} \\
ni \text{ kee ni kà já kačà-de} \\
\text{took threw out}
\end{align*}
\]
te ni ku ṣiní u míl vá?u: and supped two thousand coyotes

and left over animals breakfast

and lard (of) flea this

they made soap

and sold

market Rincon

and hide (of) flea this

took soaked

and took out two thousand yoke-straps

* In story verse five precedes verse four.
The Flea

6d

tè nì keⁿdoo āān nì kúú  píä:a:l || \ . \ \ \ \ . \ . ||
te nì ⁿdöö nì kuu ān pyåål - \ . \ . \ . \ . ||
and left over was a pole-strap

7a

tè ᵊútú ci tiyó?pó yá?a: || \ \ \ \ \ ||
tè ᵊútú ci tiyó?pó yá?a-ni \ \ \ \ \...
and eyes (of) flea this very one

7b

ni kí?pín nì ká iìn (?) si iči: || - \ \ \ \ \ \ ||
ni(i) nà iči \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ ...
took hung up to dry

7c

tè ni kè ᵊdoo lull: || \ . \ \ \ ||
te nì ke ᵊdöö lull \ . \ . \ . ||
and remained small

7d

ja ná tó?on yóó já ni ná či:tò: - \ . \ \ \ \ \ ||
kwentá yóó já ni na čitú \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ ...
which like moon which has become full.

Note: j is phonetically [h] plus slight velar friction; A is a high back unrounded vowel. Bold face type is due to typographic necessity and has no deeper meaning.