

Bagpipes from Afar

I live by hills and plains, half a world away
From the isles and highlands where my grandfolks do lay.
I work by rigs and farms, villages and towns
But something was long missing that needed to be found.

Then one night as I lay tucked up in my bed
Their voices sounded gently deep inside my head
They told me, 'Dear laddie, we have a gift for ye
And it's the love of our land and it will set ye free.'

CHORUS

I hear the bagpipes skirling, coming from afar
They carry on the wind and reach down from a star.
The notes pull on my heart and touch my very soul
And tell me that in this life I do have a role.

I looked throughout my home for all the maps I had
To find those special names they'd told me as a lad.
Brora, Tain, Culloden, St. Andrews and the Fife
Sweet familiar places from a former life. CHORUS

Now I know 'bout Scotland though I've not yet been there
And that's made me feel more honest and more fair
About all those parts that join to make my past
And give to me a pride that always will last. CHORUS x 2

Cairn of Tears

Come with me little one, come away now
O come to the shore with me
And there you will find a glistening wee stone
Where the waves roll in from the sea
And you'll carry it up to the top of the hil
Where you're mother and brother will be
And there you will place it upon the cairn
That is waiting for all to see

Then we'll go down and down etc.

Come with me little one, come away now
Oh come to the shore with me
And there you will see yon bonnie wee ship
That will carry us over the sea
For they've taken our cattle, and they've burnt down our house

And there's no left a forest or tree
I canna say why God has left us to die here
But now away we must flee

Come with me little one, come away now
Oh come to the shore with me
For it's time now to leave this gallant wee ship
That has carried us over the sea
Though your mother has died, and your brother has died
And there's only you left, you and me
To greet the Red River and Douglas himself
In a place where at last we'll be free
And we'll build us a home on this land of our own
And our home it forever may be
And we'll carry the mem'ries of that wee little stone
That you place on the cairn by the sea

The Eagle's Come Back Again

John George Brown left the County Clare
Headed wherever his dream would go
From India to America's gate
Kootenai on his way

At Wild Horse Creek, the rush for gold
Down Tobacco Plains, Kootenai rode by
The 49th, at the Great Divide
Saw the buffalo disappear

As the sun falls down on a Rocky sky
Despite the Spirit of the Great West Wind
Hear a whispering through the pines
The eagle's come back again.
On the one hand, developer's mark
On the other one Mother Nature's way
Watching over the Waterton
Kootenai's there to stay

In the vista of the lakes he'd find
Peace as far as the eye could see
"I've seen this in my dreams" he'd say
"I'll be here till I die."

His Nitchimoose tended at his side
A bottle of whisky on his chest, as
An eagle with a watchful eye

He'd be back someday.

The months went by, Brown in his grave
The first plane skimmed above the trees
To Nitchimoose he'd come back to her
Kootenai was here once more.

As the sun falls down on a Rocky sky
Despite the Spirit of the Great West Wind
Hear a whispering through the
pines
The eagle's come back again.

Little has changed, the fight goes on
Rape the land or hug a tree, still
Watching over the Waterton
Kootenai's there to stay
As the sun falls down on a Rocky sky
Despite the Spirit of the Great West Wind
Hear a whispering through the pines
The eagle's come back again
The eagle's come back again
Oh the eagle's come back again

Foothills Hymn

Down in the coulee on a cool October evening
There's a bite in the wind tells me winter's on its way
The hawk in the poplars along the creek is keening
And the dogs range out along a field of last year's hay
I can see the lights of our neighbour's old log cabin
There's new snow on the peaks of the mountains high above
It's the beauty of the eastern slopes as leaves begin a' turnin'
That reminds me why I live here in the foothills I love

Chorus: Where I worship at the altar of the high mountain pass
By a stream rippling down to the Old Man River
And I kneel in the pines 'neath the azure cast
Of an Alberta sky that rolls on for ever
To give thanks to God that I'm here - and alive

As day turns to dusk and night follows close behind
The shadows of the Rockies reach out across the plains
The coyotes cry from the rocks along the ridge
As they greet the harvest moon with their lonely refrains

Now the chill of the night sends me on my homeward way
As the wings of passing geese whisper softly up above
It's the beauty of the mountains at the ending of the day
Reminds me why I live here in these foothills I love

The Good Ship Hope

In the winter of '81 they set sail 'cross Trinity Bay
Knowing that full well no longer could they stay.
They hauled on the anchor and gave the wind some sail
Never for a moment believing they would fail.

CHORUS

They ran along the coast, sails at full mast
Wondering how long the gale it would last
Cutting through the waves, riding on the crest
Giving her hell and doing their best.

They were bound for Foster's Point, a town not far away
They figured with some luck they'd only need a day
Before they could return after dropping off their load
Made up of railway sleepers tucked in the schooner's hold.

The Hope she had a crew of seven, veterans one and all
They knew the work and the sea, winter, spring and fall
They'd grown up on the rocky land but worked far from shore
Listening to the voices spinning old seafarin' lore. CHORUS

As the Hope left behind the cape, heading for the open sea
A lashing fiercesome squall would soon upon her be
She was pounded by a wind she barely could abide
And then the sea rose up and rolled her on her side.

The crew they fell and pitched into that terrible cold
They knew that to survive they would all have to be bold.
They grabbed on to the stays with all the courage they had
Each and everyone did so from the old man to the lad. CHORUS

They hung on for many hours during that long and horrible night
Then slowly one by one they gave up on the fight.
One man named John Collins lashed himself to the mast
He battled the awful cold but his heart it wouldn't last.

When the people from Hickman's arrived onto that scene
Only Samuel Strong was alive where seven once had been.
The rest had all perished, most beneath the waves dark blue

Leaving behind their loved ones to mourn the Hope's crew. CHORUS x3

The Helmsman

In the waters of Norway I first learned my trade
To chart a fine course by the stars and the sun
In the heart of a storm, I did lead a great raid
But our longship was far to the west when 'twas done
So we made for the coast of a new found land
Of forest and fiord and snow
A desolate coast, so deserted and lonely
That back to the north we did go

Up from the islands with Cook and Vancouver
We sailed the west coast of a land with no name
We reached Nootka Sound, thought the voyage was over
But soon we weighed anchor and sailed again
To seek an illusion, the famed North West Passage
A way through the ice safe for trade
As I made for a lead, it closed in before me
And our hope for a way through would fade

I sailed with Franklin in cold Arctic waters
In 1818 and in '20 once more
I should have stayed home with my sons and my daughters
For it's '45 and we're froze on the shore
Now Sir John is thinking of traveling by land
To the south where the polar bears roam
And I think it is likely we'll die on the ice
Before we'll ever see home

I've shipped with Amundsen two years in the ice pack
Through Lancaster Sound to the Gulf of Queen Maude
We've mapped the North Pole and with each westward crack
In the ice we move onward with guidance from God.
Still we sail slowly, in perilous channels
Seeking a route to the west
And when I spied a whaler out in open water
We reckoned our voyage a success

In the water so Norway I first learned to sail
With my friend Henry Larson who captains this ship
The St. Roch's a fine vessel; he stands at the rail
Scanning the ice through this bleak endless trip
>From west to east through the ice pack we traveled
Then east to west once again

But when we docked at last in Vancouver
We were met by nary a man....

John Rae – Aglooka (He Who Takes Long Strides)

Hard men bred in the Orkney Isles
Sailed the stormy northern seas
Trading over many miles
For the Company

Born in eighteen and thirteen
Tempered by his rugged land
Tough as iron, in his teens
He learned a surgeon's hand

To the great Nor' West he came
Stranded by the winter storms
Orkneymen will know his name
He who takes long strides

Captivated by the land
Learned to live like native Cree
The wilderness at his command
Roaming far and free

Pulled the wilderness around him
Wore it's beauty like a cloak
Walked a thousand miles of ground
With the native folk

To the northern coast he came
Proved the North West Passage true
Canadians will know his name
He who takes long strides

Searched for Franklin and his crew
From the Inuit he learned
The fate of those who were past due
English contempt earned

Wealthy nobles cast their blame
Denied the truth of John Rae's tale
Lady Franklin did defame
Him but he did not fail

Now he sleeps in Magnus Church

Gun and blanket by his side
All the world will know his name
He who takes long strides

Memories from Dieppe

He always had a view to give and a story he'd love to share
He spun his yarns long and tall and usually with some flair.
Then one day when I was a lad I asked him about the war
And he suddenly stopped talking and headed out the door.

I asked my dad what I'd done wrong to make the old man leave
But he told me not to worry and to let his cousin grieve
For Art had been on the beaches of Dieppe back in '42
When Canadians fought like heroes while overhead airplanes flew.

CHORUS

They came from Pictou County, Sherbrooke and the Soo
Brandon, Regina, Red Deer, Hope and Whitehorse too.
For they were Canadian soldiers far from their own homeland
And they battled with endless courage over those rocks and sand.

The years passed quickly and I only saw Art now and then
But one night at his house he took me aside into his den.
He said it was time to answer my question from long ago
Then he added I wasn't to stop him once he was in full flow.

He told how he and five thousand others hit the French shoreline
Only to be met by an enemy who'd been there for some time.
His voice choked as he told about the day he went to hell
And his eyes got teary as he said how they'd all fought so well. CHORUS

Mothers

In the cold and stormy December
Of a life so full of reward
She sits in vacant reflection
A heartbeat away from her lord

A rocker helps with a rhythm
From a time at age 34, when she
Danced the three-step with Courtney
Around the sand-covered floor

Waltzing and dreaming
Shuffling well into the night

The memories are fading
She's down but not without fight

The children have grown and they've scattered
With kids of their own, busy blues
Making time for a faltering mother
One more on the list of to dos

Waltzing and dreaming
Dancing well into the night
The memories are fading
She's down but not without fight

Some have known a time full of wishin',
Of regrets for things left undone
When's the time right for remembering
Mothers before they are gone.

Murphy's Gone

Alone and half a world away
From poor old dad, desperate friends
Murphy left to make his way
Fourteen young and brave

From Emerald Isle to Maritimes
The great unknown, headed west
East coast to the B.C. shore
Alberta for awhile

Murphy's gone, touched us all along the way
Died alone the way he came
What's left now , is a laugh and a smile

At 24, took a wife
Next year immortality
Fought the war from near the Isles
He left those years ago

Came back home, made his mark
Lost his son in a crash and burn
Quit his job as a slaughter-man
For a gentleman's life of age

Last days not remembering
Where he'

d come or where he'd been
Not his wife, nor his friend
Could help him on his way

But from afar the memories,
A little comfort, made him see
He wasn't really, in the end,
Out here all alone.

My Paradise

Sometimes I think I'm almost done
Nowhere left, no place to run
Then I roll another dice
Looking for my paradise
Must be better somewhere else
Nothing's perfect here for sure
Maybe I'll just hit the road
To find a geographic cure

Think I have it all figured out
What OK is all about
Then I see another side
Doubt can take me for a ride
Call it dead end, going nowhere
Need something different, don't you know
Tell me what I've got to lose,
Down the road, well here I go

Took myself down to the sea
Thought that was the place for me
Just another chance to roam
Find somewhere to call my own
It really doesn't matter much
Where you go or what you touch
Home's not very hard to find. . .

Sometimes I think I'm almost done
Nowhere left, no place to run
Then I roll 'em once or twice
Looking for my paradise
Can't be better somewhere else
What's perfection, anyway
Maybe I'll just be where I am
Home is here, it's home to stay
Maybe I'

Il just be where I am
Home is here, it's where I'll stay

The Nasookin

If you head along the highway down east of Nelson way
On the northside of the road is a ship where some people stay
It seems so very odd what greets you on this day
As you pass along this most unusual bay

A sailor man told the tale
Of how the Nasookin used to sail
Upon the Kootenay from east to west
For 35 years she gave her best
And then one day they said no more
That she'd be taken to the shore
And there she'd wait for a change
But no one knew just how strange.

CHORUSx2

Oh no, what's by the road
It's too much for my head to hold
Oh no, I need a drink
It will help my mind to think

They took her out after the war
Made her a restaurant and a store
Her days as a ferry now in the past
No one knew how long she'd last
Then she earned a whole new life
As a home to a husband and wife
Who lived just west of Balfour Bay
And wanted to stay for many a day. CHORUS x2

So now you know this watery yarn
About a ship that's near a barn
And when next you drive on by
Give her a pause and a sigh
Because she had such a fate
That it takes time to relate
Now you too can share the scene
Of the Nasookin and where she's been.

CHORUS x 2

CHORUS

Oil City

We packed up all our gear and we pushed out to the west
We had a dream of a time when our lives would be best
Thanks to the black liquid discovered in some soil
For those with the hearts strong enough to struggle and to toil.

And we built a small town and we called it Oil City
And it became a place where no one found much pity.
Because all were searching for that eternal buck
But after just a few months nearly all were out of luck.

CHORUS

For millions of good folks, it seems so very far.
But back long years ago, a few hundred saw their fate
Tied to the very mountains where riches did await.

When travel costs rose high and the distance grew too far
We workers soon stopped wishing and we took to every bar.
Then we grabbed what was left and we headed for our homes
Back to the places where our hopes would never roam. CHORUS

Now all that's left is a sign tucked by a flowing stream
And it tells the sad tale of those who owned a dream
And then lost it when the world could not pave the way
To that distant valley where our hopes once did lay.

CHORUS x 2

Rideau Canal

My family was starving, 'twas then I heard the call
There's work for you in Canada, there's work for you and all
I sailed for this grand new world, the reason I will tell
There's two thousand Irishmen at work on this canal

I have no shoes upon my feet, no hat upon my head
I swing that pick and shovel, a'wishin' I was dead
The barrows wear my hands down, and the blasting ruins my ears
There's men a dyin' every day, but I've no time for tears

So dig, boys dig
Dig 'til you reach hell
There's three more years 'til we can quit
This damned Rideau Canal

If I survive the winter, and the fever let's me be

And Colonel By does keep his word to pay my proper fee
I'll finish out my term, and I'll buy a piece of land
Then I'll send for my family, that waits in Ireland

My family was starving, 'twas then I heard the call
There's work for you in Canada, there's work for you and all
I sailed for this grand new world, the reason I will tell
It's for my life and liberty I work on this canal

Sentinels of the West

It's wasn't too long ago, back in nineteen ninety-seven
When they attacked the Standard giant that soared halfway to heaven
She'd stood there sure and strong for countless many years
And when she started to fall, it was hard to stop the tears.

CHORUS

And they knocked them down and pulled them down and forced them to the ground
And they knocked them down and pulled them down and forced them to the ground
But only to their past was their destiny bound
Now all that's left behind is a scene that's locked up in my mind
Now all that's left behind is a scene that's locked up in my mind

And the next year they headed south, over to Barons town
Where they told the good folks there they'd tear their old one down
The sun was shining bright when the backhoe dug in deep
And when the old one fell, more than a few did weep.

And when another year passed, Wilson Siding's time came due
So scores of curious folks drove out, ready for a final view
And when it started to tilt, the cameras snapped away
So that lonely scene could endure for many a day. CHORUS

Now the sentinels of the West are headed to the history book
Soon that'll be the only place where you can get a look
At those colourful friends that served us all so well
Leaving behind the many with plenty of tales to tell. CHORUS

As they scrambled on that ground some fell never to stand again
No one had time to wonder if their efforts were all in vain.
Art joined those who were wounded and were taken far away
Where they would all struggle to survive for another day.

On each November 11th Art wore his honours on his chest
Except one special medal tucked away far from the rest.

He kept it just for himself where no one else could see
And when finally he died, it joined him on his last journey. CHORUS x 2

Shades of Green

What shade of green
Is it the colour of money
Does it feel like greed
Or taste like honey
Is it avarice
Done for it's own sake
In a world of green
No give all take

What shade of green
In the envious eye
Brings you to your knees
Makes you want to cry
Or in the coulee rolling like a lullaby
In a world of green
Either low or high

What you make of it
Your own choice
It's deep inside
Time to give it voice
It's all around us
What's it about
A world of green
Can't live without

What shade of green
Is it on St. Paddy's
At the blarney stone
With your shamrock Daddy
May the luck of the Irish
keep another day
In a world of green
Hope you find your way.

What shade of green
Is it in your beer
Are you drinking it now
Feeling kind of queer
Keeps your spirits up
long after midnight

In a world of green
Everything's all right

When we were pirates

We left our homes on May 6, bound for distant land
All 50 men or more of us, a small adventurous band
We wanted to be pirates, privateers or bunccaneers
We wanted to grab some loot and to strike so many fears.

We started off our journey down deep in the Caribbean
Knowing we had a chance to grab everything worth stealing.
But when we boarded a cruise ship, the cameras all came out
The tourists took so many photos we could only shout:

CHORUS

Leave us alone, folks, leave us alone
We're only here to rob you blind
And look at the attitude we do find.

So we headed up the Florida coast ready to steal again
But then some thugs on the shore made our stop in vain
Because they started shooting with all manner of gun.
And plainly took away all of our pirating fun.

We sailed up north to that place they call New York City
And when we went ashore the locals showed no pity.
So we quickly fled their grasp and cast ourselves away
Knowing that we'd never return if there were any way. CHORUS

Then we headed onto Halifax to get ourselves a drink
And maybe find some romance and take time to think.
When the locals saw us, they hoisted up their bottles
Then chucked those missiles at us – we left at full throttle.

We took our courage with us and headed for PEI
Where we found a quiet spot and in ambush we did lie
But when some farmers saw us, they reached into the ground
Pulling out some taters which they chucked all around. CHORUS

Then we rode the St. Lawrence all the way to Montreal
Where we figured we'd relax and stay until the fall.
But our hopes quickly ended when hockey sticks and some pucks
Came flying at us by the score – where was our good luck.

Our spirits down we headed west to Ottawa and the Hill

Where we were soon greeted with a mighty tax bill
And when we couldn't pay the tax, they towed our ship away
Saying it would go for a sponsorship plan needed for a rainy day. CHORUS x 2