Big River

Jimmy Nail

Walking on cobbled stones
Little bits of skin and bone
Jumping on a tram car for a rideI can remember then
'Cause I was a just a boy of ten
Hanging around the old QuaysideNow all the capstans and the cargo boats
And Stevedores are gone
To where all the old ships go
But memories, just like the sea live on'Cause that was when coal was King
The river was a living thing
And I was just a boy but it was mine
The coal TyneFor this was a big river
I want you all to know
That I was proudThis was a big river
But that was long ago
That's not now
That's not nowMy father was a working man
He earned our living with his hands
He had to cross the river every dayHe picked up a Union card
Out of the Neptune yard
Mouths to feed and bills to payThere came a time for him to sail
Across the sea and far away
And finally when that war was won
You brought him home and home he stayedAnd when his days were done
Under a golden sun
You took him back to where he longed to be
Back to the seaFor this was a big river
I want you all to know
That I was proudThis was a big river
But that was long ago
That's not now
That's not nowThat's not nowThe Neptune was the last to go
I heard it on my radio
And then they played
The latest number oneBut what do they do all day
And what are they supposed to say
What does a father tell his son?If you believe that there's a bond
Between our future and our past
Try to hold on to what we have
We build them strong, we built to last'Cause this is a mighty town

Build upon a solid ground
And everything they've tried so hard to kill
We will rebuildFor this is a big river
I want you all to know
I'm so very proudThis is a big river
But that was long ago
That's not nowAnd this is a big, big river
And in my heart I know
It will rise again
The river will rise again

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