

Generations of Change

Noel McLoughlin

My father was a baillie from a wee farm at Caiplie
He worked on the land all the days of his life
By the time he made second, he aye said he reckoned
he'd ploughed near on half of the east nuke of Fife.
He worked on at Randerston, Crawhill and Clephinton
Cambo and Carnbee and Big Rennyhill
At Kingsbarns he married, at Boarhills he's buried
But man, had he lived, he'd be ploughing on still
For those days were his days, those ways were his ways
To follow the plough while his back was still strong
But those days are past and the time came at last
For the weakness of age to make way for the young
I was nae for ploughing, to the sea I was going
To follow the fish and the fisherman's ways
In rain, hail and sunshine I watched the long runline
No man mere contented his whale working day
I've lang lined the Fladden Ground, the Dutch and the Dogger Bank
Pulled the big fish from the deep Devil's Hole
I've side trawled off Shetland, the Faroes and Iceland
In weather much worse than a body could thole
For that day was my day, that way was my way
To follow the fish while my back was still strong
But that day is past and the time came at last
For the weakness of age to make way for the young
My sons they have grown and away they have gone
To search for black oil in the far northern sea
Like oilmen they walk, and like yankees they talk
There's not much in common between my sons and me
They've rough-rigged on Josephine, Forties and Ninian
Claymore and Dunlin and Fisher and Awk
They've made fortunes for sure, for in one trip ashore
They spend more than I earned in a whole season's work
For this day is their day, this way is their way
To ride the rough rigs while their backs are still strong
But this day will pass and the time come at last
For the weakness of age to make way for the young
My grandsons are growing, to the school they soon be goin'
But the lang weeks of summer they spend here with me
We walk through the warm days, we talk of the old ways
The cornfield, the codfish, the land and the sea
We walk through the fields that my father once tilled
Talk with the old men who once sailed with me
Man, it's been awfully good, I showed them all I could
Of the past and the present, what their future might be
For the morn will be their day, what will be their way

What will they make of their land, sea and sky
Man, I've seen awfu' change, still it seems very strange
To look at my world through a young laddie's eyes
Song Discussions is protected by U.S. Patent 9401941. Other patents pending.

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