

Spare Hand

I dream of distant waters though my fishing days are done,
And for thirty years I've worked the factory floor.
Each night when I lay sleeping I can still hear howling gales,
As we haul our nets and bring our fish aboard.
The owners called me casual though I'd twenty years at sea,
And I swear I worked as hard as any can.
And although they cut the quotas and they took me job away,
In my heart I know I'm still a fisherman.

It's a dim and distant memory now and fading with the past,
Like a photograph that's not seen light of day.
But you can't forget the hunger and you don't forget the pain,
Or the misery that doesn't go away.
'Cause when the fishing ended and the men in suits demand,
"You'd better find another job and this time on dry land,
But don't expect redundancy or to have a helping hand."
Don't they know that I was born a fisherman?

The cold of the Atlantic chilled the hearts of angry men,
Who struggled on to earn their daily bread.
Who like their fathers long before had ploughed the ocean deep,
And they never thought their living would be dead.
Now they're waiting by the factory gates, they're queuing in a line,
But, "Try again tomorrow, lads, you've had no luck this time."
So they wander home and tell the wife and kids it will be fine,
And I wish that I was still a fisherman.

And the TV and the tabloids got bored and went away,
And they told us that they'd bigger fish to fry.
And the men in suits informed us, it's a fight you cannot win,
So give up lads and let the fishing die.
But they were sure to pay the owners, was their influence that great,
That they wouldn't have them suffer at their hand?
It's a trickle down economy, they will give you what they can,
So you best forget you were a fisherman.

And the children sit and listen to the tales their fathers tell,
And it doesn't seem a world they'll ever know.
Of the catches and the conflicts, of the misery and hell,
And the battle grounds off Iceland long ago.
For their father is a carpenter, or a driver of a van,
Or a logger or a miner, or he does the best he can.
But when he goes to sleep at night he'll be bringing in the cran,
'Cause you'll always live and die a fisherman.
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