

Plainsong

"The Clearances"

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As I was out walking down by the seashore
I met a young woman was crying
I asked her the reason for all her lament
and why she was wringing and sighing
oh sir its a wonder we meet here today
and a wonder my heart is still beating
for not two hours hence
I have buried my child
and my husband in despair defeated

May the winds of the ocean blow over my bones
and hell be my home when Iâ€™m dying
if ever a man shall be able to say
that a daughter of Scotland was lying
for the story unfolding will burn at your ears
and melt out the heart of a mountain
and the glens full of sheep
will be washed by my tears
where once there were people for counting

they took us at daybreak before we arose
they took us without any warning
and the house we had lived in for all those years
was nothing but stones by the morning
they tore at our roofs with their breakers of steel
and spat on our trust with their curses
and we starved and we froze in the wind and the rain
while they fingered the straps of their purses

now ships there are waiting in Stranraer town
the east winds are cruelly blowing
and new worldâ€™s are waiting and old worldâ€™s are
gone
with the chill of the breakers a-rolling
its hope will be sailing to scotiaâ€™s pale shores
like flocks of old geese they are flying
but I had a dream as I lay in my bed
and its here Iâ€™ll be doing my dying

and princes and kings will be drinking tonight
a toast to the power and the glory

and may God bless their dreams as they lay in their
beds
as I make an end to my story
and all that I'm asking is earth for a grave
a stone and a bunch of white heather
for my joy and my beauty no more will I live
but death be my comfort forever

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