

Martin Simpson

"Never Any Good"

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You were never any good with money.
You couldn't even hold a job,
Not steady enough for the office,
Not hard enough for the hod.
You'd rather be riding your Norton
Or going fishing with your split cane rod.
You were never any good with money.
You couldn't even hold a job.

When your grammar school days were over,
It was nineteen-seventeen,
And you did the right and proper thing.
You were just eighteen.
You were never mentioned in dispatches.
You never mentioned what you did or saw.
You were just another keen young man
In the mud and stink of war.

You were never any good with money.
You couldn't even hold a job,
Not steady enough for the office,
Not hard enough for the hod.
You'd rather be singing the Pirate King,
Or going fishing with your split cane rod.
You were never any good with money.
You couldn't even hold a job.

You came home from the Great War
With the pips of a captain's rank.
A German officer's Luger,
And no money in the bank.
Your family sent you down in the coal mine
To learn to be captain there,
But you didn't stand it very long.
You needed the light and the air.

You were never any good with money.
You couldn't even hold a job,
Not steady enough for the office,
Not hard enough for the hod.
You'd rather be watching performers fly

Or fishing with your split cane rod.
You were never any good with money.
You couldn't even hold a job.

When the second war came along,
You knew what should be done.
You would re-enlist to teach young men
The booby trap and the gun;
And they sent you home to Yorkshire,
With a crew and a Lewis gun,
So you could save your seaside town
From the bombers of the Hun.

You were never any good with money.

You couldn't even hold a job,
Not steady enough for the office,
Not hard enough for the hod.
You'd rather be finding the nightjar's nest,
Going fishing with your split cane rod.
You were never any good with money.
You couldn't even hold a job.

And when my mother came to your door,
With a baby in her arm,
Her big hurt boy only nine years old,
Trying to keep her from harm,
If you had been a practical man,
You would have been forewarned.
You would have seen that it never could work,
And I would have never been born.

There's no proper work in your seaside town,
So you come here looking for a job.
You were storeman at the power station
Just before I came along.
Nobody talked about how you quit,
But I know that's what you did.
My mother said you were a selfish man,
And I was your selfish kid.

You were never any good with money.
You couldn't even hold a job,
Not steady enough for the office,
Not hard enough for the hod;
And your Norton it was soon gone
Along with your split cane rod.
You were never any good with money.
You couldn't even hold a job.

You showed me eyebright in the hedgerow,

Speedwell and travellers joy.
You showed me how to use my eyes
When I was just a boy;
And you taught me how to love a song
And all you knew of nature's ways:
The greatest gifts I have ever known,
And I use them every day.

You were never any good with money.
You couldn't even hold a job,
Not steady enough for the office, maybe,
Not hard enough for the hod.
You'd rather be riding your Norton
Or going fishing with your split cane rod.
You were never any good with money.
You couldn't even hold a job.

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