

## Mary Jane Lamond

### "Hor"

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This Gaelic song recounts an immigrant's lament, in simple but poignant poetry, on the numbing experience of Gaels compelled to leave Scotland and settle in the New World. The verses convey potent impressions of the conditions of starving refugee Highlanders. Imagine the dismay of a people from treeless islands when they encountered the overwhelming Canadian forest.

The words here are edited from the singing of North Shore (Cape Breton) gaelic singer Segan (John Shaw) of Indian Brook (Abhainn a' Chbair).

(An Immigrant's Lament)

ho r the subject of my thoughts  
Great tonight is my mourning  
ill I love you deeply  
Although I didn't win you for myself

1. When I stand in the doorway, I see the forest above my head.  
My eyes begin to weep; my courage is overwhelmed.

2. I had three brothers who I will forever recount.  
It's a pity that I wasn't at the quay when they bid us farewell.

3. When we arrived at the Table, my entire family was there:  
my sister and brother-in-law; without a strip of clothing on their backs.

4. A scraped cow's hide fixed on my back and I was starving  
with the hue of death coming over my face.

5. If I had a creel and a sickle, the low seaweed and my own boat,

my children wouldn't be eating gruel and I wouldn't be  
oppressed by this miserable land.

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