

Dogtown

Harry Chapin

Up in Massachusetts There's a little spit of land.
The men who make the maps, yes, they call the place Cape Ann.
The men who do the fishing call it Gloucester Harbor Sound,
But the women left behind, they call the place Dogtown.

The men go out for whaling, past the breakers and the fogs.
The women stay home waiting they're protected by the dogs.
A tough old whaler woman who had seen three husbands drown,
Polled the population and she named the place Dogtown.

There's all these grey faced women in their black widow's gowns,
Living in this grave yard granite town.
Yeah, you soon learn there's many more than one way to drown;
That's while going to the dogs here in Dogtown.

And she speaks: My father was a merchant all in the Boston fief.
When my husband came and asked him for my hand.
But little did I know then that a Gloucester whaler's wife
Marries but the sea salt and the sand.

He took me up to Dogtown the day I was a bride.
We had ten days together before he left my side.
He's the first mate of a whaling ship,
the keeper of the log.
He said, "Farewell, my darling, I'm going to leave you with my dog."

And I have seen the splintered timbers of a hundred shattered hulls,
Known the silence of the granite and the screeching of the gulls,
I've heard that crazy widow Cather walk the harbor as she raves
At the endless rolling whisper of the waves.

Sitting by the fireside, the embers slowly die.
Is it a sign of weakness when a woman wants to cry?
The dog is closely watching the fire glints in his eye.
No use to go to sleep this early, no use to even try.

My blood beats like a woman's,
I've got a woman's breast and thighs.
But where am I to offer them
to the ocean or the skies?

Living with this silent dog
all the moments of my life,
He has been my only husband;
am I a widow, or his wife?

Yes, it's a Dogtown and it's a fog town,
And there's nothing around 'cept the sea pounding granite ground
And this black midnight horror of a hound.

I'm standing on this craggy cliff,
my eyes fixed on the sea.
Six months past, when his ship was due,
I'm a widow to be.
For liking this half living with the lonely and the fog,
You need the bastard of the mating of a woman and a dog.

And I have seen the splintered timbers of a hundred shattered hulls,
Known the silence of the granite and the screeching of the gulls,
I've heard that crazy widow Cather walk the harbor as she raves
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