

The Watch

Stan Rogers

They dragged her down, dead, from Tobermory,
Too cheap to spare her one last head of steam,
Deep in diesel fumes embraced,
Rust and soot upon the face of one who was so clean.
They brought me here to watch her in the boneyard,
Just two old wrecks to spend the night alone.
It's the dark inside this evil place.
Clouds on the moon hide her disgrace;
This whiskey hides my own.

It's the last watch on the Midland,
The last watch alone,
One last night to love her,
The last night she's whole.

My guess is that we were young together.
Like her's, my strength was young and hard as steel.
And like her too, I knew my ground;
I scarcely felt the years go round
In answer to the wheel.
But then they quenched the fire beneath the boiler,
Gave me a watch and showed me out the door.
At sixty-four, you're still the best;
One year more, and then you're less
Than dust upon the floor.

It's the last watch on the Midland,
The last watch alone,
One last night to love her,
The last night she's whole.

So here's to useless superannuation
And us old relics of the days of steam.
In the morning, Lord, I would prefer
When men with torches come for her,
Let angels come for me.

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