

One house town

Fenced myself into this one house town
CP lumber wants to buy me out
But the hippies tell me
I should be glad that I can't see
The way they've scraped these hillsides
clean
My favorite day is Wednesday
Mail comes in on a floatplane
Care-packs from my daughters
News of the world
Outside my one house town
Tofino ladies feel sorry
Oh poor old lady up there...
An only child learns how to cope
being alone
In this one house town

Remittance Man

He didn't mean trouble
sometimes it just got in the way
He never meant
to tar & feather the family name
From the Isle of Mann to Ireland
Boated and railed his way to Vancouver
Found a dog
led him to his bride to be
but a man of town loves his highs, and
shoulders his lows
till too many late night shows sends him
sickly home
Well get on your feet there's a new life to
greet all these
acres of land to clear
A strong wife to please, kids to feed, oh
your back is aching
Oh Bless the Man
Paid to stay as far
as he can from Scotland
So tired of you –
messing things up the way you do

Partner

He promised father
he'd be a good partner to me
Sure he was charming, could fool anyone.
If only he do what he said
we'd be the best of Friends
Now I'm stuck in a mess
3 kids, dead weight partner

You can put him in the wild but you can't
take the town from the man
After the farm in Alberta, Orchard in
California, I know these
homesteading ways
Willie wants please father, be good to his
promise...but goes off... Tofino for days
While I'm digging it all up
and piling it all out
Ripping the roots up,
burning the stumps out
I put that crop in
I canned that harvest
Oh but he promised father he be a good
partner to me...

The last laugh

Waiting for the steamship at dawn with our
net out
hey won't you just give me hand up
get this tyee in the dugout
Father's gone out drinking
Ma's pregnant, crying, and digging
irrigation through the clearing
Works us hard till evening
We paid father back - mice and rabbit scat
Father thought the raisins gone bad
Don't laugh at breakfast.
Mothers gone in labour,
that old priest he rowed over
Father smiled and rolled a cigarette
With a page from the Old Testament
Skipping out on the job
pulling stumps out of the bog
Out swimming mother stole our clothes
Out with hearts up in our throat
We dragged our barefeet
Mother didn't pity She laughed as we
worked out there, Flea bitten in our skivvies
Frank fell into the loo
Cause someone made the boards loose
Wonder what he's gonna get up to...
Paybacks coming for you
So you better watch your step
there's legholds
Now they're covered by overgrowth
some have gone rusty over winter
others still blood stained from the last
laugh

BLUE HARBOUR

Moon
consoling the pair
paddling through
a blue harbour
Homestead
so damn quiet
these empty beds
A blue harbour, All fogged in
high tide, low tide
curse the sea
took most of mine
Wolves cry out
o'er the breaking family ties
Lonely Harbour, All fogged in
you have to start again
no-one's going to do it for you
Fence and axes
I'm encaged
Tame the wild
another secret burial

ROWBOAT

A ne'er do well maybe yes, and no, the
way Tofino he would row
a pint with the boys and a shard of the hair,
row back home when the weather faired
younger ones would pull up the stumps
strong for days Maquinna comes
a 12 mile row for supplies and mail hope a
for favorable wind to sail
When natives pulled canoes ashore
Paddle over to the store
Trade their furs for goods we'd sell, get
back to the village 'fore darkness fell
One day a motor sound did roar
through the garden 'round the shore
no-one knew the source of sound
trumpeting for miles around
In their tracks the family stood still looked
to the sky looked to the hills
searched the ground and went to the sea
ran to the bushes and hid quietly
marvel the vessel for lack of the oars
never beheld this wonder before
ease the burden and lighten the load bless
the day the less to row
Children And Flowers

1926 to 31, 3 newborns died,
buried in the garden
as the breast milk dried
Babies of mine, young face and flowers
All have their limited number of hours

1936, Petition granted, Willie and I post
Mistress and Master
Willie died that summer, but I chose to stay
once I lost the reason why I came'

1947 my youngest child, well maybe
Laurie's fate was already dialed
just like his father 11 years, his lifeless
body and the boat washed
back up on shore
Children of mine, a young face and flowers
All have their limited number of hours

BC widow

with orchard and nursery
wishes a partner object matrimony
Dresses and Gumboots
dirt under fingernails
sell you a canned cougar to stew up for
dinner
save all the bad eggs
for all the heartbreakers
teach 'em a lesson though they may not
get it

Calloused heart and hands
dresses and gumboots
crushing mice heads between thumb and
forefinger
snapping the chickens necks
tying goat kids up
bait for the cougars to get
but the cougars are bagged in the end
and the pioneer
verses nature wins

THE SKINNING TREE

Treeing cougars with dogs
I haven't time for that
through the goat shed roof
they leap right in
Everytime the deer stock thin

'55 was a record year
lost nine goats and shot 10 cats
after that there isn't much to fear.
bounty came back \$400 cash
Esau would've joined me at the skinning
tree
It's busy working all alone
He rattled out his last breath in January
and now the nights are long
Placed a new ad that spring
For some kids and a widower
I love the sounds they made
walking goats down to the pasture
One day on the way back
a cougar came to attack
goats began to stampede
kids climbed a tree to safety
That cougar met my 30-30...
Caught 'em two toes in the trap
bleating kid and scare-dee cat
lamp lights up the dark
Eyes flash gun sparks
I sight fast
aim for the heart...
visitors are rare these days
need that hide to get my pay
defend my right to live this way
It's home I'm gonna stay
Sure to keep my 30-30
Clean, loaded, and ready
So any cougar I meet,
got a date with destiny
next up on the skinning tree sell the hide
can the meat
mail the tail and mark the sheet check the
gut for what it eats
don't let it see you looking weak
take the lantern out a night
red eyes show up every-time
lock your gaze and stare it down
don't even think to turn around
if it takes a leap at me
last sight it'll ever see
I've shot over seventy
with this here 30.30

Black Widow

A faint light
In the dark forest

Draws you in
And there she is
Needs eight arms
Just to keep shop
So you cut wood and fix the fence
But the work keeps piling up
You can see she's queen of a sinking ship
So you grab a pail start to bail quick
Until your body wears
Your feet stick
Seems your going under with it

Your life's blood
Mends the web
Under a black
Soil falls over your grave
Under the web of a black widow

DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO

42 years in this wilderness home
takes wily mind to
keep it in form
farm hands are scarce
in this remote west coast
I'm mostly alone since
the children have grown
I'm bringing Tommy home
He's out of the coma
When he's tired of packing mail
I say if you don't like here
you can live in Essondale

you do what you have to keep it together
and if you ask me it here that he's better
Always in the clouds that one
If I keep him in the garden
I won't lose another son...
42 year my soul has been given
working land, feeding chickens
pulling stumps raising children
The world outside has no place for women
hold on Tommy it's better you stay the
world
out there is such a mixed up place
think your missing all the fun if
I keep you in the garden
we can work this land one
If I keep you in the garden
I won't lose another son

HARVEST TIME

Dahlia's are opening
harvest waiting
Apples are sweet
Best you could eat
It hasn't rained in eight weeks
we're hauling water from the creek
from lake we ran a line
bears ate it all the time

Bringing in the crop
diggin up the nursery stock
phone for supplies
on the telegraph line

The kids'll bring they're broods
boys'll muck the chicken coop
the girls and I make rabbit stew
and some apple pie too

Tom'll help Frank load
Store items from the boat
he'll complain about chores
until dinner when his mouth's full
Trapping cougar
skinning hides
clear the fencelines
canning day and night
too much work for Tom and I
every bloody harvest time

Peter cares for me
on his boat he brings me supplies
Started that after George and Frank died
He admires me uncritically

He has got strong hands
works as well as I can
I'll sell him all the acres
he'll hire for me caretakers (to chorus)
Margaret frets for me

CAN'T SAVE ME

Margaret frets for me
An old lady in her garden
Far from hospitals an other awful
institutions
I've given all to survive on the land I broke
My eyes have gone but my heart knows it'll
stop safe in my home
**There comes a time when every old
lady has got to go on
From rainforest or rest home
Nothing a daughter can do to save me**