

I'm A Workin Chap

Greig-Duncan 3-656

Ord's 'Bothy Songs and Ballads'

Tom learned this song many years ago after hearing it sung by Robin Williamson of Incredible String Band fame. It is included in the Greig-Duncan Collection, but Tom's more complete version comes from John Ord's 'Bothy Songs and Ballads'.

I'm a working chap as you can see
And you'll find an honest lad in me
I'm neither haughty, mean nor prood
Nor iver taaks the things too rude
I niver live abeen mi means
Nor seek assistance fae mi friens
But day and nicht, through thick an thin
I'm workin life oot tae keep life in

Sae nae maitter friens whate'er befaa
The peer folk they maun work awa
Through frost an snaw an rain an wind
They're working life oot tae keep life in

The peer needle wummin that we saw
In reality and on the waa
A picture sorrowfu tae see
I'm sure wi me you wid agree
Her pey's scarce able tae feed a moose
Far less tae keep hersel an hoose
She's naked, hungry, pale and thin
Jist workin life oot, tae keep life in

Chorus

Don't call a man a drunken sot
Because he wears a ragged coat
It's better far, mind don't forget
Tae rin in rags than rin in debt
He may look seedy, very true
But still his creditors are few
He toddles on, devoid o sin
Jist working life oot, tae keep life in

Chorus

Aye but maybe frien's I've bade ower lang
An I hope I hae said nithin wrang
For I've merely winted for tae show
The wye the peer folk hae tae go
Jist imagine a man wi a hoosefae o bairns
Tae raise them up it taaks aa he earns
Wi a willin heart an a coat gey thin
He's workin life oot tae keep life in

Chorus

aa=all
abeen=above
awa=away
aye=yes
bade=stayed
befaa=befall
fae=from
friens=friends
gey thin=rather or very thin
hae=have
hoose=house
hoosefae=houseful
iver=ever
jist=just
maitter=matter
maun=must
mi=my
mind=remember
moose=mouse
nae=no
nicht=night
nithing wrang=nothing
wrong
niver=never
oot=out
ower lang=too long
peer=poor
pey=pay, wage
prood=proud
rin=run, live
snaw=snow
sorrowfu=sorrowfull
taaks=takes
tae=to
waa=wall
wi=with
wid=would
winted=wanted
wummin=woman
wye=way