

The Ways of Man

Gordon BOK

Ann Mayo MUIR

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FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS, INC.

SHARON, CONNECTICUT 06060



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We've all been singing and playing music for a long time and we've been friends for a long time.

We live in Maine, Connecticut, and Maryland—too far. We get together as often as we can—a day here, a week there—never enough. Sometimes it seems like we arrange concerts and tours just to get our families together: sing early and talk late.

Someone asked: How can you perform together when you see each other so little? Well, we send tapes back and forth, of course. And we concentrate very well, but most of all we listen to each other very carefully.

We respect each other's music. Each song is different, like people. And each of us sees the music in a different way. It's nice to be able to share someone else's music, someone else's way.

And it's nice to work with people who care about you as much as the music you share.

Side 1

THE GOLDEN VANITY (<i>trad./Stewart</i>)	6:11
WEE DARK ENGINE ROOM (<i>Bogle</i>)	3:42
I KNEW THIS PLACE (<i>Mallett</i>)	3:55
THE CASTLE OF DROMORE (<i>trad.</i>)	3:37
REEDY RIVER (<i>Lawson/Kemoter</i>)	5:00

Side 2

THE WAYS OF MAN (<i>Bok, BMI</i>)	4:57
THE FINAL TRAWL (<i>Fisher</i>)	4:15
SINCE WE PARTED (<i>Kincade</i>)	:57
DANCING AT WHITSUN (<i>Martin/trad.</i>)	3:23
GENTLE MAIDEN / PLANXTY IRWIN (<i>trad.</i>)	2:53
NO MAN'S LAND (<i>Bogle</i>)	5:35

Recorded by Sandy Paton
Photograph by Rebecca Busselle
Design by Lani Herrmann

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Descriptive notes and lyrics in enclosed booklet.

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NOTES ON THE SONGS

THE GOLDEN VANITY

Side 1, Band 1.

This has been in my family a long time. Two or three of my mother's people sang it to me and, as usual, each had a different version. I've sung it all my singing life, and I hope it never leaves me.

This is probably the fourth tune I've sung to it; it's a derivation of a tune Bob Stuart thought he learned from a book... He didn't know he couldn't read music at the time.

The words are a mixture of various family versions. The only version I can place is the "Some were playing poker..." verse — from my aunt Ethewyn, but even that has probably changed. (G.B.)

There was a lofty ship and they
put her out to sea,
And the name of the ship was the
Golden Vanity,
And they sailed her on the
lowlands, lowlands low,
They sailed her on the lowland
sea.

And she had not been sailing but
two weeks or three
When she was overtaken by a Turkish
Revelry
As she sailed along the lowland,
lowland low,
As she sailed along the lowland
sea.

Then boldly up spoke our little
cabin boy,
Saying, "What would you give me
if the galley I destroy?
If I sink her in the lowland,
lowland low,
If I sink her in the lowland sea?"

"To the man that them destroys," our
Captain then replied,
"Five thousand pounds and my daughter
for his bride,
If he'll sink them in the lowland,
lowland low,
If he'll sink them in the lowland
sea."

Well, the boy he made ready, and
overboard went he,
And he swam to the side of the
Turkish enemy
As she lay along the lowlands,
lowlands low,
As she lay along the lowland sea.

And he had a brace and auger made
for the use,
And he bored nine holes in her hull
all at once
As she lay along the lowland,
lowland low,
As she lay along the lowland sea.

And some were playing poker and some
were playing dice;
Some were in their hammocks, and the
sea as cold as ice,
And the water rushed in and it
dazzled to their eyes,
They were sinking in the lowland
sea.

Well, he swam back to his ship and he
beat upon the side,
Crying, "Shipmates, take me up, for
I'm wearied with the tide,
And I'm weary of the lowlands,
lowlands low,
I'm weary of the lowland sea."

"Well, I'll not pick you up," the
Captain then replied,
"I'll shoot you, I'll drown you, I'll
sink you in the tide;
I will sink you in the lowland,
lowland low,
I will sink you in the lowland sea."

"If it was not for the love that I
bear for your men,
I'd do unto you as I did unto them;
I would sink you in the lowland,
lowland low,
I would sink you in the lowland
sea."

And the boy bowed his head; down sank
he,
And he said farewell to the Golden
Vanity
As she lay along the lowland,
lowland low,
As she lay along the lowland sea.

(repeat first verse)

(If I replace "her" with "him," it's because we often speak of a vessel of another country as "he" — "the Spaniard," "the Frenchman," etc., as though we were talking of the man that sails her. Don't know why. (G.B.)

WEE DARK ENGINE ROOM (Robertson)
Side 1, Band 2.

Many songs are sung about whaling and whalers. Almost all describe a voyage, or the catch of a whale, or some of the men and their needs. This song, written by Harry Robertson, describes the bone-chilling existence of the men who stayed with the ships when they were laid up for the winter, doing routine maintenance and engine overhaul in the clammy, unheated holds and engine rooms. I learned this song from Gary Gardner and Helen Kivnick. (E.T.)

*In that wee dark engine room,
Where the chill seeps through
your soul,
How we huddled 'round that wee
pot stove
That burned oily rags and coal.*

*How the winter blizzards blow,
and the whaling fleet's at rest,
Tucked in Leith harbor's sheltered
bay, safely anchored ten abreast.
The whalers at their stations,
as from shed to shed they go,
Carry little bags of coal with them,
and a little iron stove.*

*The fireman Paddy worked with me
on the engine, stiff and cold.
A stranger to the truth was he;
there's not a lie he hasn't told.
And he boasted of his gold mine,
and of all the hearts he'd won,
And his bonny sense of humor shone
just like a ray of sun.*

*Then one day we saw the sun and the
factory ships' return.
Meet your old friends, sing a song,
hope the season won't be long.
Then homeward bound when it's over,
we'll leave this icy hold,
But I always will remember that
little iron stove.*

I KNEW THIS PLACE (Mallett)
Side 1, Band 3.

Written by David Mallett, of Dover Foxcroft, Maine (who also wrote "The Garden Song"), about visiting a farm quite like the one where he was raised (though the original one burned). This appears through the courtesy of Dave and Newworld Records (Blue Hill Falls, Maine), whose new release contains this and many more of Dave's songs. (G.B.)

I first heard Dave Mallett's song during a period in my life when my own childhood home, back in Michigan, was being sold. I was having a series of nightly dream battles where I fought constantly to save the home which will always be mine. This song stirred my memories, focused my feelings, and helped me deal with that curious internal trauma — a trauma which I've since discovered many listeners share with me. (A.M.)

*I knew this place, I knew it well,
Every sound and every smell,
And every time I walked I fell
For the first two years or so.
There across the grassy yard,
I, a young one, running hard,
Brown and bruised and battle-scarred
And lost in sweet illusion.*

*And from my window I can see
The branches of an ancient tree;
Reaching out, it calls to me
To climb its surly branches.
But all my climbing days are gone,
And these tired legs I'm standing on
Would scarcely dare to leave the spot
Upon which they are standing.*

*And I remember every word
Of every voice I ever heard,
Every frog and every bird —
Yes, this is where it starts.
My brother's laugh, the sighing wind:
This is where my life begins,
This is where I learned to use
My hands and hear my heart.*

*This house is old, it carries on
Like verses to an old-time song,
Always changed, but never gone,
This house can stand the seasons.
Our lives pass on from door to door,
Dust across the wooden floor;
Like feather rain and thunder roar,
We need not know the reason.*

And, as these thoughts come back
to me
Like ships across the friendly sea,
Like breezes blowing endlessly,
Like rivers running deep —
The day is done, the lights are low,
The wheels of life are turning slow,
And, as these visions turn and go,
I lay me down to sleep.

I knew this place, I knew it well,
Every sound and every smell,
And every time I walked I fell
For the first two years or so.
The day is done, the lights are low,
The wheels of life are turning slow,
And, as these visions turn and go,
I lay me down to sleep.

THE CASTLE OF DROMORE Side 1, Band 4.

A melody I've heard in varied clothing
since I can remember listening; an
ancient Irish air that sounds good on
almost any instrument. I learned these
words (mostly) from Tommy Makem, who
could only tell me that the tune is
much older than the words. (G.B.)

The October winds lament around
the castle of Dromore;
Yet peace is in her lofty halls,
my loving treasure-store.
Though autumn leaves may droop and
die, a bud of spring are you.

Sing hushabye loo, low loo, low
lan,
Hushabye loo, low loo.

Dread spirits all of Black Water,
Clan Owen's wild banshee,
Bring no ill will to him nor us,
my helpless babe and me,
And Holy Mary, pitying us,
to Heaven for grace doth sue.

Take time to thrive, my ray of hope,
in the garden of Dromore;
Take heed, young eaglet, 'til thy
wings are feathered fit to soar.
A little rest, and then the world
is full of work to do.

REEDY RIVER Side 1, Band 5.

Henry Lawson has given us many vivid

word pictures of Australia around the
turn of the century. "Reedy River" is
one such picture, more evocative than
descriptive about the story. The tune
for the poem was written by Chris Kemoter
for a show called "Reedy River" over
twenty years ago. I learned most of the
song from Joanie Bronfman and Neal Mac-
Millan, and Priscilla Herdman supplied
the rest. (E.T.)

Ten miles down Reedy River
a pool of water lies,
And all the year it mirrors
the changes in the skies.
Within that pool's broad bosom
is room for all the stars;
Its bed of sand has drifted o'er
countless rocky bars.

Around the lower edges
there waves a bed of reeds,
Where water-rats are hidden
and where the wild duck breeds,
And grassy slopes rise gently
to ridges long and low,
Where groves of wattle flourish
and native bluebells grow.

Beneath the granite ridges
the eye may just discern
Where Rocky Creek emerges
from deep green banks of fern,
And, standing tall between them,
the drooping she-oaks cool
The hard, blue-tinted waters
before they reach the pool.

Ten miles down Reedy River
one Sunday afternoon,
I rode with Mary Campbell
to that broad, bright lagoon;
We left our horses grazing
'til shadows climbed the peak,
And strolled beneath the she-oaks
on the banks of Rocky Creek.

Then home along the river
that night we rode a race,
And the moonlight lent a glory
to Mary Campbell's face.
I pleaded for my future
all through that moonlight ride,
Until our weary horses
drew closer side by side.

Ten miles from Ryan's Crossing
and five below the peak,
I built a little homestead
on the banks of Rocky Creek.

*I cleared the land and fenced it
and plowed the rich red loam;
My first crop was golden
when I brought Mary home.*

*Now still down Reedy River
the grassy she-oaks sigh;
The water holes still mirror
the pictures in the sky.
The golden sand is drifting
across the rocky bars,
And over all forever
go sun and moon and stars.*

*But of the hut I built
there are no traces now,
And many rains have leveled
the furrows of my plow.
The glad bright days have vanished,
for somber branches wave,
Their wattle-blossom golden,
above my Mary's grave.*

THE WAYS OF MAN (Bok, BMI)
Side 2, Band 1.

I wrote this song a couple of years ago while doing the music for a public television documentary on the maritime history of Maine called "Home to the Sea." It became the theme song, with Ann Mayo singing the full version of the song at the end of the film. If she sounds better than Mrs. MacDonald, remember that she's younger and the day is later and the fate of the small fisherman on the Northeast Coast looks even darker than it did before.

There's no subsidy, here, for the "little fellow" — only more paperwork; who can blame her if her attitude is more modern? (G.B.)

The ways of man are 'passing strange:
He buys his freedom and he counts
his change,
Then he lets the wind his days
arrange,
And he calls the tide his master.*

*Oh the days, oh the days,
Oh the fine long summer days.
The fish come rolling in the bays
And he swore he'd never leave me.*

*But the days grow short and the year
gets old
And the fish won't stay where the
water's cold,
And, if they're going to fill the hold,
They've got to go offshore to find
them.*

*So they go outside on the raving deep,
And they pray the Lord their soul
to keep,
But the waves will roll them all to
sleep,
And the tide will be their keeper.*

*Oh the tide, oh the tide,
Oh you dark and you bitter tide,
If I can't have him by my side,
I guess I have to leave him.*

*I gave you one, I gave you two,
The best that rotten old boat could do.
You won't be happy 'til I give you
three,
But I'll be damned if you'll get me.*

*Oh the tide, oh the tide,
Oh you dark and you bitter tide,
If I can't have him by my side,
The water's welcome to him.*

*Ah, Lord, I know that the day will
come
When one less boat comes slogging
home;
I don't mind knowing that he'll be
the one,
But I can't spend my whole life
praying.*

*I gave you one, I gave you two,
The best that poor old boat could do.
You'd have it all before you're
through —
Well, I've got no more to give you.*

(repeat first verse)

THE FINAL TRAWL (Fisher)
Side 2, Band 2.

Archie Fisher said that he wrote this song after seeing a couple of perfectly good steel trawlers rusting away on the ledges ("skerries") outside a harbor in northern Scotland, and was told by the fishermen that they were drove there by their owners because, even with the government subsidy to help the fishermen,

the fishing was so poor they still couldn't make a living, and the men didn't want to see them cut into scrap by the ship-breakers.

In other lands, you'd suspect that insurance might have something to do with it — but who's to say? It's not hard to miss your harbor in the fog... (G.B.)

Been three long years since we made
her pay,
Haul away, my laddie-o,
And we can't get by on the subsidy,
Haul away, my laddie-o.

Then heave away for the final trawl;
It's an easy pull, for the catch
is small.

So stow your gear, lads, and batten
down,
And I'll take the wheel, lads, and
turn her 'round.

And we'll join the Venture and the
Morning Star,
Riding high and empty towards the bar.

For I'd rather beach her on the
skerry rock
Than to see her torched in the
breaker's dock.

And when I die, you can stow me down
In her rusty hold, where the breakers
sound.

Then I'd make my haven the Fiddler's
Green,
Where the grub is good and the bunks
are clean.

For I've fished a lifetime, boy and
man,
And the final trawl scarcely nets
a cran.

Cran = a measure of herring taken from
the net, averaging 750.

SINCE WE PARTED
Side 2, Band 3.

"Since We Parted" is an ever fresh,
tender love song. It puts me in touch
with an innocence and passion which re-
mains bright in my memory in spite of

lasting for so brief a time. I learned
it around 1963 from Gordon Bok. (A.M.)

Given to me many years ago by a girl
from Dayton, Ohio, named Patti Kincade.
Since I've never heard anything like it,
I assume the words and the music were
her own. (G.B.)

Since we parted yestereve,
I do love thee, love, believe —
Twelve times dearer, twelve times
longer,
One dream deeper, one night stronger,
One sun surer — thus much more
Than I loved thee, love, before. (*)

DANCING AT WHITSUN (Marshall)
Side 2, Band 4.

Words by Austin John Marshall. I'm
told that the traditional spring dances
in many English villages were performed
exclusively by men, but that in a couple
of these villages there came a time when
the wars had taken such a toll that there
were no longer any men who knew the
dances. At this point, were it not for
the intervention of women who *did* remem-
ber them, the tradition would probably
have been lost in those places.

The tune is an old English/Scottish
air, variously known as "The Week Before
Easter," "The False Bride," "I Once
Loved a Lass," among other titles.

The starred words may be inaccurate,
since I learned the song by ear. (G.B.)

It's fifty long springtimes since she
was a bride,
But still you may see her at each
Whitsuntide,
In a dress of white linen with
ribbons of green,
As green as her memories of loving.

The feet that were nimble tread
carefully now,
As gentle a measure as age will allow.
Through groves of white blossoms, by
fields of young corn,
Where once she was pledged to her
true love.

The fields they stand empty, the
hedges go free,
No young men to turn* them or
pastures go see*.
They are gone where the forest of
oak trees before
Are gone, to be wasted in battle.

Down from the green farmlands and
from their loved ones
Marched husbands and brothers and
fathers and sons.
There's a fine roll of honor where
the Maypole once stood,
And the ladies go dancing at Whitsun.

There's a straight row of houses in
these latter days
All covering the downs where the
sheep used to graze.
There's a field of red poppies, a
gift from the Queen,
But the ladies remember at Whitsun,
And the ladies go dancing at Whitsun.

GENTLE MAIDEN/PLANXTY IRWIN
Side 2, Band 5.

Gordon learned the first part of
"Gentle Maiden" so long ago he can't
remember when or from whom it came.
The second part he learned a few years
ago from the group "The Sow's Ear"
(Helen Stokoe, Ed and Jo-Ellen Bosson).

Nick Apollonio taught "Planxty Irwin"
to Gordon. It is one of the tunes at-
tributed to the most famous of the Irish
harpers, Turlough O'Carolan (1670-1738),
and bears the name of Colonel John Irwin
of Sligo. Though found in collections
written as a jig, the tune is now often
played at a slower tempo as a waltz.

The origin and meaning of the word
"planxty" is perplexing. As used with
the Carolan tunes, it means "a tune
written in someone's honor." It may be
a corruption of the old Irish word
"slainte," meaning "good health."

The tunes became a medley mainly be-
cause Annie Muir had some trouble re-
membering which was which! Perhaps this
happy confusion just goes to show the
natural affinity these lovely Irish
melodies have for one another.

NO MAN'S LAND (Bogle)
Side 2, Band 6.

Archie Fisher brought this powerful
song to the U. S. about a year ago.
Helen Kivnick taught it to me after
learning it from the author, Eric Bogle.
(E.T.)

Well, how do you do, Private William
McBride?
Do you mind if I sit here down by
your graveside?
Been walking all day (I'll rest here
awhile) in the hot (warm) summer
sun,
(Been) walking all day, and I'm
nearly done.
I can see by your gravestone you were
only nineteen
When you joined the glorious fallen
in nineteen sixteen.
Well, I hope you died quick, and I
hope you died clean,
Or, William McBride, was it slow
and obscene?

Did they beat the drum slowly,
Did they sound the fife lowly,
Did the rifles fire o'er you as
they lowered you down?
Did the bugles sing (play) "The
Last Post" in chorus?
Did the pipes play "The Flowers
of the Forest?"

Did you leave a wife or a sweetheart
behind?
In some faithful heart is your memory
enshrined?
And, though you died back in nineteen
sixteen,
In some faithful heart are you ever
nineteen?
Or are you a stranger without even
a name,
Enshrined forever behind a glass pane
In an old photograph, torn and
tattered and stained,
Fading to yellow in a bound leather
frame?

The sun's shining down on these
 green fields of France;
 Warm winds blow gently and the
 poppies dance.
 Trenches have vanished under the
 clouds (plow);
 There's no gas and no barbed wire,
 no guns firing loud (now).
 But here in the graveyard that is
 still No Man's Land,
 Countless white crosses in mute
 witness stand
 To man's pained indifference to
 his fellow man,
 And a whole generation that's
 butchered and damned.

(Oh) I can't help but wondering, poor
 William McBride,
 Did all those who died here know just
 why they died?
 Did you really believe them, when
 they told you "the Cause,"
 Did you really believe that that
 war would end wars?
 Oh, the suffering and the sorrow and
 the glory and the shame,
 (The) killing and the dying was all
 done in vain,
 For, William McBride, it all happened
 again
 And again, and again, and again, and
 again.

Gordon Bok: voice, 6-string and 12-string
 guitars, "Bokwhistle."

Ann Mayo Muir: voice, flute, "Bell"
 guitar.

Ed Trickett: voice, hammered dulcimer,
 6- and 12-string guitars.

Additional notes by Caroline Paton.

(*) Since these notes were originally
 written, we have learned that the
 poem "Since We Parted" was written
 by Edward Robert Bulwer-Lytton, an
 English statesman and poet (1831-
 1891), who wrote under the pseudo-
 nym: Owen Meredith. Thanks to
 Pamela Gunnell for putting us on
 the right track.