

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Homeless Man

Homeless Man
(Harry Robertson)

I've travelled hard these last ten weary years
And my youthful dreams have slowly turned to tears
If you think I am complaining
I can tell that I'm not
For I know that this is just a drifter's lot

Many years my home has been the wayside camp
I have starved and sweated on the river bank
And I've fought with fists and feet
Roughnecked drifters that I meet
Broken dreams and bottles pave my lonely street

As a homeless boy I thought when I'm a man
I will change this world and right what wrongs I can
Since then I have met defeat
It's a bitter bread to eat
And the homeless boy is now the homeless man

Happiness has not been mine upon this earth
Both my parents left me when they met their death
And I'll drink before I eat
With the drifters that I meet
For this sorrow here is mine and mine alone

Now my friends I think that I must move along
And I'm glad that you have listened to my song
For the road is all I've known
And I must wander it alone
As an outcast, homeless drifter and unknown

Source: From the singing of Paul Lawler Darwin Australia, late 1970s.

Paul learned the song from the late Declan Affley, one of the most important figures in the Australian folk scene in the 1960s and 1970s. Much to his disgust, because of the similarity of their voices, Paul was known in Sydney for a time as 'Little Declan'. Paul doesn't sing much these days, but he sings folk and folk idiom songs as well as anyone I've ever heard, including personal heroes such as Roy Bailey, Gordon Bok or Al O'Donnell. In the past few years, he has been busy building fire spectacles for the Maleny/Woodford festival in Queensland and other productions, including the biggest catherine wheel in the southern hemisphere.

I notice that DT has 'The Wee Pot Stove' (Dark Engine Room). A nice recording was done of it relatively recently by the Cork group Any Old Time on their album 'Crossings'. Anyhow, here is another fine song from the pen of Harry Robertson:

PS
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