FERRYMAN, THE
Ralph McTell

Oh, the traveller moving on the land, behold I give you, I give you the travelling man.
And he's very heavy laden with the questions in his burden.
Lo, and I give you the travelling man.
He has crossed the mountains, he has forded streams.
He has spent a long time surviving on his dreams.
Many times he's tried to lighten up his heavy load.
But his compromises fail him and he ends back on the road.

Oh the traveller he is weary, the travelling man he is tired.
For the road is never ending in his fear he has cried aloud for a saviour
And in vain for a teacher, someone to lighten up the load
And he's heard the sounds of war in a gentle shower of rain
And the whisperings of despair that he could not explain.
The reason for his journey, or the reason it began
Or was there any reason for the travelling man.

At last he reached a river so beautiful and wide
But the current was so strong he could not reach the other side
And the weary travelling man looked for a ferryman strong enough to row against the tide,
And the ferryman was old but he moved the boat so well,
Or did the river move the boat? The traveller could not tell.
Said the ferryman, "You're weary and the answers that you seek,
Are in the singing river, listen humbly it will speak."

Oh, the traveller closed his eyes and he listened and he heard
Only the river murmuring and the beating of his heart.
Then he heard the river laughing, and he heard the river crying
And in it was the beauty and the sadness of the world
And he heard the sounds of dying, but he heard the sounds of birth
And slowly his ears heard all the sounds of earth.
The sounds blended together and they became a whole
And the rhythm was his heartbeat to the music his soul.

And the river had no beginning, as it flowed into the sea
And the seas filled the clouds and the rains filled the streams
And as slowly as the sunrise, he opened up his eyes
To find the ferryman had gone, the boat moved gently on the tide.
And the river flowed within him, and with it he was one
And the seas moved around the earth, and the earth around the sun.
And the traveller was the river, was the boat and ferryman,
Was the journey and the song that the singing river sang.