

The First Rebreather

Big Big Train

In a place where the river banks draw near
Men work a heading to the west.
Where streams like giants' fingers close
From the hills to the emptiness beneath,
To the depths of the mere.

Morning light, midwinter sun
Underneath; the river song.

In a place where the river banks draw close
Men break stone to make new ground.
Light and air are hard down deep to find
Engines work to hold the water back
To the edge of the mere.

'Run boys run toward the light;
The river's in, the tunnel's in';
Here she comes
The sleeper wakes,
Ten thousand years
She lay in wait for this.

Every night their dreams were filled
With the fear of the river breaking in.
But this was not a river god,
This was something rising from the deep,
From the depths of the mere.

'Run boys run make for the light,
Save yourselves, the tunnel's in.'
Here he comes
The first rebreather,
Like a mummer,
Like a souler
(Come to save them.)

Rising up to the height of the river
At flood tide.
Engines fail, lost to the water
As silence falls.

This man will walk into darkness,
One foot in front of the other,
Into the unsounded depths
Of the heading;
Into the fifth circle of hell,
With no light to lead him home,
Man is all alone at the end.

This man will walk into darkness
Without fear of what lurks in the shadows.
Watching the surface grow quite still,
Waiting for hope at the ninth hour,
Man all alone in the darkness.
Here he comes: the first rebreather.