

Dead Man's Boots

Sting

You see these work boots in my hands, they'll probably fit ye now my son,
Take them, they're a gift from me, why don't you try them on?
It would do your old man good to see you walking in these boots one day,
And take your place among the men who work upon the slipway.

These dead man's boots, though they're old and curled,
When a feller needs a job and a place in the world,
And it's time for a man to put down roots,
And walk to the river in his old man's boots.

He said, "I'm nearly done and asking this, that ye do one final thing for me!
You're barely but a sapling, and you think that you're a tree.
If ye need a seed to prosper, ye must first put down some roots.
Just one foot then the other in these dead man's boots."

These dead man's boots know their way down the hill,
They could walk there themselves, and they probably will.
There's a place for ye there to sink your roots,
And take a walk down the river in these dead man's boots.

I said, "Why in the Hell would I do that? And why would I agree?"
When his hand was all that I'd received, as far as I remember.
It's not as if he'd spoiled me with his kindness up to then ye see.
I'd a plan of me own and I'd quit this place when I came of age Septem-ber.

These dead man's boots know their way down the hill,
They can walk there themselves, and they probably will.
I'd plenty of choices, and plenty other routes,
And he'd never see me walking in these dead man's boots.

What was it made him think I'd be happy ending up like him?
When he'd hardly got two halfpennies left, or a broken pot to piss in.
He wanted this same thing for me, was that his final wish?
He said, "What the hell are ye gonna do?"
I said, "Anything but this!"

These dead man's boots know their way down the hill,
They can walk there themselves and they most likely will.
But they won't walk with me 'cos I'm off the other way,
I've had it up to here, I'm gonna have my say.
When all ye've got left is that cross on the wall?
I want nothing from you, I want nothing at all.
Not a pension, nor a pittance, when your whole life is through,
Get this through your head, I'm nothing like you,
I'm done with all the arguments, there'll be no more dispute,
And ye'll die before ye see me in your dead man's boots.