

# Robin Williamson, Lough Foyle

Words RW, music trad Irish: Nancy's Whiskey 1978

At age 14 they gave us training  
To number off by threes and give salutes  
To clean and fire the Lee and Enfield  
To answer smartly sir and shine the boots  
Me and all the other poor bastards  
Glengarry bonnets on at bugle call  
I never thought I looked good in khaki  
It hurt the pride as well as it scratched the balls  
I volunteered for the signals section  
To work the radios was a skivers joy  
and on manoeuvres I'd twist the orders  
and put confusion on the soldier boys

To Northern Ireland for summer training  
Near to Lough Foyle not far from Derry town  
To get the feel of the regular army  
and generally act the bloody clown  
To eat melodious beans and gravy  
To sleep on old grey blankets stiff with stains  
and on the cary in the morning  
To squat in rows like cows with labor pains

Me and some lads broke out one evening  
Climbed through the wire and down the lough beside  
We spied some fishers in their long boats  
Casting nets out on the silvery tide  
They soon pulled shoreward and we got to talking  
To row us over the water they'd agree  
They hoist us dry shod in the boat beside them  
And way across the watery waves went we  
Cross to Greencastle in Southern Ireland  
A street of cottages set end to end  
A couple of churches and several boozers  
Where we fell to drinking with our Irish friends

The best black porter, strong beer and whiskey  
We had a bevy there as drunk as lords  
and all skylarking and cutting capers  
Till that old church clock it chimed for four  
The fishers rowed us back over the water  
and went to fish upon the morning rise  
But we were drunk and devoid of caution  
and we were halted climbing back through the wire  
and me and the lads were all defaulted  
and straight away upon fatigues were led  
To double at our every duty  
With our rifles held above our heads

Bur my good luck was not all departed  
I got infected in both the ears  
Some kind of hole in the two of my ear drums  
Till not a single order I could hear  
I sadly smiled and looked downhearted  
While they could curse and shout and rage  
and that's the way I would end a story  
When I was 14 years of age