

The Bottom of the Great Lakes

(Mike Ford SOCAN 2005)

Have ye heard of a ship built by LaSalle
For the inland sea? The Griffin was her name
She sailed good in the age of fur
When the waves were hers and his majesty's to claim
In a mid-October haze
She slipped between the waves without a trace
Now her hold and deck are among the wrecks and the rocks and souls and bones
At the bottom of the lakes - the bottom of the Great Lakes

Have ye heard of the fate of the lives and freight
Of the cash and copper-laden Kitty Reeves?
Ticket-holders tossed and the cargo lost
In the mounting toll of every roll and heave
How within the sight of land
She was swallowed under Manitoulin's gaze
Now her hold and deck are among the wrecks and the rocks and souls and bones
At the bottom of the lakes - the bottom of the Great Lakes

All the sailors tell of the days of hell in November
Nineteen-hundred and thirteen
And the hurricane that ripped and tore every lake and shore
With an anger never seen
How in Huron's depths alone
Eight Laker ships were thrown to an icy grave
Now there holds and decks are among the wrecks and the rocks and souls and bones
At the bottom of the lakes - the bottom of the Great Lakes

Have ye heard how the Carl M. Bradley sailed
In a bruising gale in nineteen-fifty-eight?
That mighty ship on the year's last trip
Was warped and whipped and twisted to her fate
Well a thousand rivets strained
And she burst and snapped insane upon the waves
Now her hold and deck are among the wrecks and the rocks and souls and bones
At the bottom of the lakes - the bottom of the Great Lakes

Now look down upon what's been and gone
And above to the waves that sparkle like a jewel
And ask of the numberless ghosts untold
How such blue gold can be so cold and cruel
As you race to make up time
The eternal answer climbs up with the spray
From the holds and decks and among the wrecks and the rocks and souls and bones
At the bottom of the lakes - the bottom of the Great Lakes