

Last Voyage

The tired old tramp lay waiting,
For the changing of the tide,
A winter sun smiled weakly,
Along her black scarred side.

She'd plied the ocean's highways,
For twenty years or more,
With every type of cargo,
From wheat to iron ore.

Steam turbines that had drove her,
To each corner of the map,
Now ancient, and out dated,
And ready for the scrap.

With faded paint that hid the taint,
Of ragged worn out livery.
Steamed quietly past the heather clad hills,
For her, last steel delivery.

Plodding down the western coast,
Rounding Ushants welcome light,
Pitched and rolled through Biscay,
With Portugal in sight.

Gibraltar rose above her,
As she turned in to the 'Med',
Passed the Isle of Pantalleria,
Then altered for Port Said.

Through the sand blown heat of Suez,
Down the placid sea of 'Red',
Till the barren rocks of Aden,
Sent her speed to 'Slow Ahead'.

With bunkers full, and stores afresh,
She sailed right 'On the Bell',
Crossed the balmy Indian Ocean,
Rolling easy with the swell.

Down Malaya's jungle coast,
Just eight miles off the shore,
Put Malacca Straits behind her,
Then entered Singapore.

Berthed again at Empire Dock,
In Asia's velvet night,
Ten up flung derricks signified,
The end was nigh in sight.

For five more days the winches spun,
Until there was no more,
Clydebank steel, stacked rooftop high,
Right to the warehouse door.

The old Tramp's days were numbered,
She'd done her level best,
Time to sail for Kaosihung,
And long eternal rest.

No Fanfares played, or Fireboats sprayed,
As 'Ballast Light' she went,
The Gas axe was awaiting,
To complete the last event.

At last she lay at Kaosihung Quay,
To greet the cutters 'Kiss',
The short blue flame, erased her name,
With a deadly sibilant hiss.

Just the skeletal ribs is all that's left,
In the glow of the 'Breakers' lamp,
Who could know that years ago,
She was a brand new Ocean Tramp.

By Jim Morrison