

## Once upon a Time

Pigeons roost in the silent cranes,  
A whistling wind, blows through the frames,  
Where once the jibs 'danced ' to and fro,  
Containers now, control the ' flow'.

The tramp of hob-nailed, booted feet,  
When an 'army' daily used to meet,  
New arrivals, drenched in ocean spray,  
From distant seas, so far away.

Countless propellers, churned up froth,  
Whipping 'Father Thames', to a mud brown broth,  
A quiet river, now ruefully smiles,  
As water, laps the age-old piles.

London, Glasgow, Liverpool, Leith,  
Emblazoned, on their sterns beneath,  
Funnels of every hue, and lustre,  
"Presided" over, by the 'Duster'.

Coal, fired tugs, once garbled 'toot',  
Tall funnels belching acrid soot,  
Fussily 'guarding' their lumbering 'charge',  
Vanished forever, like a desert mirage.

Smooth shaped bollards, burnished bright,  
By thousands of mooring ropes, day and night,  
Once, handsome ships berthed by the score,  
Now 'Skeletons' on a foreign shore.

P.L.A. Lighters in clustering profusion,  
Adding to this 'orderly ' confusion,  
Slings, strops, wires, cargo nets, untold,  
Discharging and loading in every hold.

Heavy Lift "Jumbo's" incessantly swung,  
From great hooks cargo, precariously hung,  
Locomotives, boilers, steel pipes for off-shore,  
A yacht , for the Sultan, of Johore.

Men who strode their steel clad decks,  
Through tempests, calms tide-rips and wrecks,  
Just 'ghosts' are left to tell the tale,  
Who 'haunt' the docks, where they set sail.

Once knife edged bows, split emerald seas,  
Felt the salty tang, of an ocean breeze,  
The mightiest fleet..... no idle boast,  
Now, rusting steel, on a Far East Coast.

It's hard to lay the past to rest,  
Especially when you've seen the best,  
Like "Robbie Burns", and 'Auld Lang Syne',  
It happened, once upon a time.

Jim Morrison  
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