

NEVER TRUST THE SEA

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(1)

My family are fishermen from the northern coast of Ireland
It's never been an easy life, but we know no other way
The sea is ever-changing - she can love or she can hate you
And the ones you leave behind on shore can only wait and pray

My uncle is the skipper of a thirty-meter trawler
The mate's my eldest brother and a cousin is the cook
In the pleasant days of summer they go north as far as Iceland
With the long lines out for codfish, and bait on every hook

(CHORUS)

But even on the calmest days, when the sea is like a mirror
The fisherman dreads what he'll never know
Of the ocean's mystery:

(After verse 1)

He fears to hear the phantom words of sailors dead before him:

(After vv 2 & 3)

He knows the words my father spoke before he sailed away forever:
"Even when the sun shines, you can never trust the sea..."

(2)

Then too soon come winter days when it's hard to make a living
- Living's what we call it, though you might not agree -
The days are short and brutal, one gale after another
The banshee rides the wind, and there are mountains in the sea

Too well I do remember a winter of my childhood -
It was getting close to Christmas in nineteen sixty-three
A boat and six good men were lost out somewhere past the islands
They said one of them was my father, and his boat was named for
me

(3)

But time is full of changes, the old men all retiring
Come ashore to take their pensions, no more to risk their lives
The boats are standing idle, and the men who once would crew
them
Are safe out in Australia with their children and their wives

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In the pubs the old men gather in the bleakest days of winter
To warm themselves with whiskey and the stories each one knows
They speak of the Atlantic like some temperamental lover
Not one of them will curse it as his life draws to a close

Words and music: Bill Black

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