

Final Trawl

By Archie Fisher (1939-2025) and on his album Windward Away (2008). A cran is a measure for fresh herring as caught; fixed by the Fisheries Board in 1852 at 37 gallons (about 750 fish). Up to 1915 the cran was measured by heaping full a herring-barrel with the ends taken out, which was then lifted, leaving the heap on the ground or floor.

Now it's three long years since we made her pay
Sing haul away me lad-di-o
And the owners say that she's had her day
And sing haul away me lad-di-o

So it's heave away on the final trawl
It's an easy pull for the catch is small

Now it's stow your gear lads and batten down
Then I'll take the wheel lads and turn her round

And we'll join the "Venture" and the "Morning Star"
Riding high and empty beyond the bar

But I'd rather beach her on the Skerry Rock
Than see her torched in the breakers dock

And it's when I die you can stow me down
In her rusty hold where the breakers sound

Then we'll make the haven and the Fiddler's Green
Where the grub is good and the bunks are clean

For I've fished a lifetime, boy and man
And the final trawl scarcely makes a cran

So it's heave away for the final trawl ...