

Adapted for singing by Mike Kennedy, © 2010

Wording changes by Charles Ipcar 7/1/2011

Key: E (4/C)

Rathlin Head-3

Am-C-----G-----C-----F
We left the murk of Mersey-side, we left the flaring town;
---C-----G-Am-----F-----G
All smouldering red by Spanish Head the storm-y sun went down;
---Am---F-----Am-----C-----F
We saw the lamp gleam out, in the Mull o' Gallo-way,
-----C-----G-----Am-----F-----G
At the edge of night toward Rathlin Light, we steamed out from the Bay –
---F-----G-----Am
Be-fore the light of morning.

Black deep of night without a star, both sky and sea did fill;
So cautious crept we through the dark, our engines near stood still;
All salt like tears on rope and rail, the sea mist clinging grey –
With Rathlin Island close to port, Kintyre to starboard lay –
Before the light of morning.

We heard across the blind black tide the lighthouse boom forlorn;
All night we heard a Glasgow barque, blowing the old cow's horn,
And groping slow we passed her by, a bare ship's length away –
"A near thing with that barque, me lad," I heard the Old Man say –
Before the light of morning.

And so, good-bye the narrow seas and the forelands roaring foam!
There's many the turning in the road that brings the sailor home;
Full speed once more our engines throbbed, as faint the east grew grey;
And I turned my face to Rathlin Head, and a long good-bye did say –

-----F-----G-----Am
In the cold grey light of morning. (2X)

Notes:

From **Songs and Chanties: 1914-1916**, edited by Cicely Fox Smith, published by Elkin Mathews, London, UK, © 1919, pp. 95-97.

"Rathlin Light" is located on Altacarry Head, Rathlin Island, North Channel, Northern Ireland, while "Kintyre" is a peninsula in western Scotland.

Rathlin Head-2

G---C-----G-----C-----F
We left the murk of Mersey-side, we left the flaring town;
----C-----Am-----F-----G
All smouldering red by Spanish Head the stormy sun went down;
----Am----F-----Am---C-----F
We saw the lamp blink out in the Mull o' Gallo-way,
-----C-----Am-----F-----G
And at dead of night to Rathlin Light a long good-bye did say –

----F-----G
Be-fore the light of morning.

Black deep of night without a star, both sky and sea did fill;
So cautious crept we through the dark, our engines near stood still;
All salt like tears on rope and rail the sea mist clinging grey . . .
And Rathlin Island close to port, Kintyre to starboard lay – (CHO)

We heard across the blind black tide the lighthouse boom forlorn;
All night we heard a Glasgow barque blowing the old cow's horn;
And groping slow we passed her by, a bare ship's length away –
"A near thing with that barque," I heard the Old Man say – (CHO)

All houseless stretch the unfenced fields that cold and green do roll,
Where the winds do herd the berg and floe that calve about the Pole;
Oh, peace be on the small green fields in a land that's far away,
And on the little farms therein, folks a-sleeping lay – (CHO)

And, oh, good-bye the narrow seas and the forelands loud with foam!
There's many the turning in the road that brings the sailor home;
Full speed once more our engines throbbed as faint the east grew grey,
And I turned my face to Rathlin Head, and a long good-bye did say –

---F-----G-----Am
In the cold grey light of morning.

Notes:

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Rathlin Head

We left the murk of Merseyside, we left the flaring town;
All smouldering red by Spanish Head the stormy sun went down;
We saw the lamp blink out and in the Mull o' Galloway,
And at dead of night to Rathlin Light a long good-bye did say –

*On a bitter cold night in the morning watch,
A little before the day!*

Black deep of night without a star both sky and sea did fill;
So cautious crept we through the dark our engines near stood still;
All salt like tears on rope and rail the sea mist clinging grey . . .
And Rathlin Island close to port, Kintyre to starboard lay –

*On a bitter cold night in the morning watch,
A little before the day!*

We heard across the blind black tide the lighthouse boom forlorn,
All night we heard a Glasgow barque blowing the old cow's horn;
And groping slow we passed her by a bare ship's length away –
"A near thing with the barque," was all I heard the Old Man say –

*On a bitter cold night in the morning watch,
A little before the day!*

All houseless stretch the unfenced fields that cold and green do roll
Where winds do herd the berg and floe which calve about the Pole;
Oh, peace be on the small green fields of a land that's far away,
And on the little farms therein where folks a-sleeping lay –

*On a bitter cold night in the morning watch,
A little before the day!*

And oh, good-bye the narrow seas and forelands loud wi' foam!
There's many a turning in the road that brings the sailor home;
Full speed once more our engines throbbled as faint the east grew grey,
I turned my face to Rathlin Head, a long good-bye to say –

*On a bitter cold night in the morning watch,
A little before the day!*

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"Rathlin Light" is located on Rathlin Island, North Channel, Northern Ireland, while "Kintyre" is a peninsula in western Scotland. Rathlin Island is an L-shaped island with

the "L" opening to the south-west. The Island therefore has headlands at the southeast point, the northwest point, and where the two legs of the "L" meet to the northeast, There is a lighthouse at each location. A lighthouse is mentioned in the song three times as the ship travels from the Irish Sea through the North Channel and then out into the North Atlantic, each a different lighthouse.