

The Oyster Wife

by Janie Meneely

You can hear the guns go off not so very far away—
Patrol boat's running with the tide.
Just pray to God that your daddy's safe away.
We don't have cash to pay another fine.

CHORUS:

And it's a cold wind that blows
Where the oyster dredges go
It's a mighty tough way to make a dollar.
It's a hard, hard road, dredging for white gold,
Finding your fortune on the water.

I was just eighteen when your dad and I first spoke,
By twenty we had said our wedding vows.
That first winter season, we had paid off on the boat.
Second season out we bought the house.
Then it came on lean, and the war came in between.
A bushel just don't bring in what it used to.
And the lawmen come and say, we can't dredge here anyway
But at night we'll oyster anywhere they choose to.

CHORUS

Some day we'll buy the store where they sell the dredging gear.
Trade will keep us busy and well fed.
And each and every night, we can wish ourselves good cheer,
And climb the staircase safely to our bed.
We'll set a lamp alight in the window every night,
Say a prayer for souls out on the river.
But till those dream comes true, pray all those guns can do
Is shoot a few more grey hairs on your mother.

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