

The Irish in the Goldfields

Verse 1

We came from misty Ireland with our pockets full of dreams,
From the bog roads and the boreens and the soft Atlantic streams.
But the hunger and the hardship drove us far across the foam,
Till we stood among the goldfields, a world away from home.

Chorus

Oh, the hills of Ballarat echo stories worn and old,
Of Irish hearts that broke there in the fever for the gold.
We were searching for a future, but the past would not let go —
And the songs of home grew softer in the diggers' camps below.

Verse 2

We dug through clay and gravel till our hands were split and raw,
And we cursed the southern sunlight and the dust that choked the jaw.
But the promise of a fortune kept us swinging day and night,
Though the only thing we found was sorrow buried out of sight.

Verse 3

Some lads were lost to fever, some to whisky, some to grief,
And the priests who came among us offered comfort, small relief.
For the letters from old Ireland brought both joy and bitter pain —
News of mothers who had faded, and of fields we'd not see again.

Chorus

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Of Irish hearts that broke there in the fever for the gold.
We were searching for a future, but the past would not let go —
And the songs of home grew softer in the diggers' camps below.

Verse 4

At night we'd gather quietly by the camp-fire's dying glow,
And we'd sing of Clare and Kerry in a voice both faint and low.
But the stars above were strangers, and the wind was not our own,
And we felt the weight of exile to the marrow and the bone.

Verse 5

Some men struck luck and prospered, others vanished in the crowd,
But the Irish in the goldfields always walked a little bowed.
For we carried famine shadows that no riches could erase —
And the memory of our homeland lingered soft on every face.

Final Chorus

Oh, the hills of Ballarat echo stories worn and old,
Of Irish hearts that broke there in the fever for the gold.
We were searching for a future, but the past would not let go —
'Till the songs of home grew silent in the diggers' camps below.