

# Man's Job

Eileen McGann

This fine song, from McGann's 1987 recording, *Elements*, has been reprinted in a recent edition *The Little Red Songbook from the Industrial Workers of the World*. The singer notes that it was "based on my experiences while working as a Bell Telephone installer a few years ago."



I spent some time working on telephones,  
Going into houses and putting in the lines;

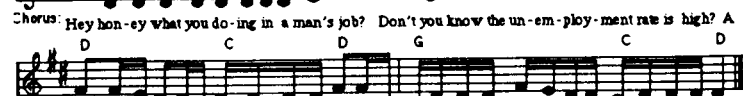
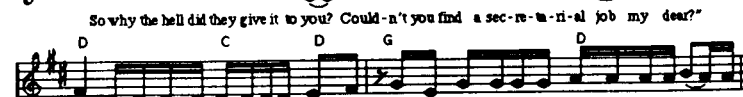
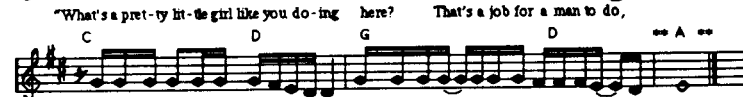
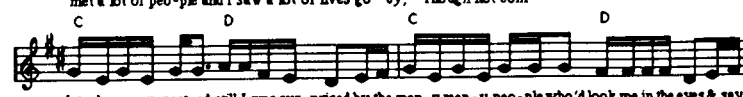
I met a lot of people and I saw a lot of lives go by. Though not completely unexpected, still I was surprised

By the many, many people who'd look me in the eyes

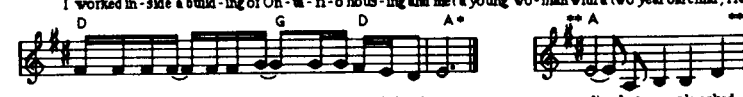
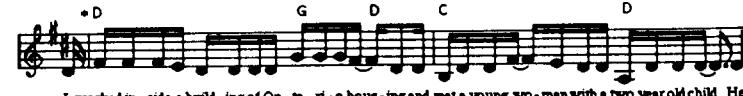
And say, "What's a pretty little girl like you doing here?"

"That's a job for a man to do, so why the hell did they give it to you?"

"Couldn't you find a secretarial job, my dear?"



Alternate bars for verses 2-4



**Chorus:** "Hey, honey, watcha doin' in a man's job?

Dontcha know the unemployment rate's high?

A man needs a job, but a woman needs a man

To protect her and support her 'til the day that she dies."

I worked inside a building of Ontario Housing  
And met a young woman with a two-year-old child.  
He followed me round, and he watched while I stapled and dialed.

His mother, speaking softly, said his father'd up and run,  
And he'd taken all their money and left her with a son,  
And the government hand-out is the only way that they can survive.

She had tried to find a job that was good enough to pay  
For the day care that her little boy would need when she's away,  
But the salaries they offered were not enough to keep them alive.

But people asked.... *Chorus*

Another time I went into a pretty little bungalow  
And met a tiny woman with three children at her feet.  
She welcomed me in and gave me tea and something to eat.

Though she wore a lot of makeup, her skill could not erase

The dark and ugly bruises that blackened half her face,

And though the weather was hot, she was wearing a blouse with long sleeves

She told me that her man was always drunk when he came home

And she hoped he'd keep on beating her and leave the kids alone,

And she hadn't any money or family and was frightened to leave.

But next door they asked....

*Chorus*

The apartment was small, but it echoed as I entered.

All it had inside was a table, bed and chair,  
But the old woman smiled at me and said she was glad I was there.

She said, "I haven't much to offer, but please come, have some tea.

I'm really very lonely now, 'cause no one speaks to me."  
I couldn't help but notice that the tea bag she used wasn't new.  
She said her husband had a pension, but it's years now since he died,

And she'd never thought of what she'd do, he'd said he would provide.

"I'm glad you've got a job," she said, "so this will never happen to you."

But her neighbours asked. *Chorus*