On a bright Christmas Eve
Long ago when there seemed to be hope
Warmed by the smile of a friend
I was sure that I could cope
But it seems that tonight
Just like every night of the year
Warmhearted smiles
Are for those who have nothing to fear.

There’s a promise of some warmth
In this cold and dreary town
In the brightly coloured glow
Of Christmas lights.
The snow lies thick and soft
Like a cozy bed of down
But hard is the curb
That’s my pillow tonight.

The love for a child
Once cause for simple joy.
Is lost in the hurrying mother
Scolding her little boy.
But here in the doorway
I hide from scurrying feet
Avoiding the fear and guilt
In the eyes that I meet.

In the shadows, the glitter
Of Christmas soon fades away.
In my sack are my gifts
Of old bottles collected today.
Soon I’ll trade them for some coins
Which I’ll trade for a bottle of wine
And I’ll shuffle on through Christmas
Searching for my lost peace of mind.

After final chorus
Hard is the curb
That’s my pillow tonight.
This is the other side of Christmas.

Our Back Pages

Fifteen Years Ago
Bulletin 18.4 (December 1984). The cover and editorial of this issue celebrated CSTM’s first LP project, Songs of the Newfoundland Outports, featuring Newfoundland traditional singers from Kenneth Peacock’s field recordings (still available even today, for those with LP capability). Moving to substantive content, articles by Tony Stephenson, Murray Shoobraid and Tim Rogers continued to explore the "Lukey’s Boat" controversy; Tim also introduced The CFMS Mail Order Service, with its very first catalogue. Roland Boutot contributed "La musique traditionnelle au Québec"; David Watts’ article "Singing and Second Language Learning" concluded with Part II; Judith Cohen wrote on two Canadian performing groups illuminating "The Medieval-Folk Connection," and David Spalding on the "Edmonton Singer’s Circle." The minutes of the 1984 AGM were included, as was Murray Shoobraid’s "Folk Notes and Queries" column. Songs: as well as the "Lukey’s Boat" variants, Edith Fowke contributed two Canadian "macaronic" (bilingual) songs, "Dans un Salon Chic" and "I Go Yesterday All Aboard Les États," and my own "The Segwun is Steamin’ Again" appeared. Roland Boutot contributed "La musique traditionnelle au Québec"; David Watts’ article "Singing and Second Language Learning" concluded with Part II; Judith Cohen wrote on two Canadian performing groups illuminating "The Medieval-Folk Connection," and David Spalding on the "Edmonton Singer’s Circle." The minutes of the 1984 AGM were included, as was Murray Shoobraid’s "Folk Notes and Queries" column. Songs: as well as the "Lukey’s Boat" variants, Edith Fowke contributed two Canadian "macaronic" (bilingual) songs, "Dans un Salon Chic" and "I Go Yesterday All Aboard Les États," and my own "The Segwun is Steamin’ Again" appeared. Records reviewed were Claude X. La Brecque’s Bubblegum and Stan Rogers’ posthumous From Fresh Water.

Ten Years Ago
Bulletin 23.4 (December 1989). This was the last issue of my first stint as editor, before I gratefully threw the torch to Lynn Whidden; the feature article was "My Life Was Not Wasted in Useless Things," reminiscences of old-time musician Ernie T. Yardley as edited by GWL. The issue included a couple of BC songs, Patrick Smith’s "Gold-Dust" (about train-robber Bill Miner), and Bill Farmer’s steamboat song "The SS Minto."

Our Back Pages

Five Years Ago
Bulletin 28.4 (December 1994). The main article featured reminiscences from accordionist Olaf Sveen, "I’m Olle Myself!," as well as "Journal Notes" on Judith Cohen’s musical travels in Iberia, Robert Ollikkala’s "Is Music a ‘Social Text’?," on Indian Ghazal singing, and "Canadian Musics," an overview of the Society’s projected Multicultural Project. A Centrefold column appeared, as well as a Festival Directory (the winter ones were pretty small, in those days). The first Poley Mountain Folk Festival and a concert by Judith Cohen in conjunction with the AGM in Calgary were reviewed, as were books Raven Tales (Peter Goodchild, ed.) and Jack in Two Worlds (William B. McCarthy, ed.), and recordings Bandaline (eponymous, again), Bob Bossin’s Gabriola V081X0, Tanglefoot’s A Grain of Salt, Dave Foster’s On That Christmas Day and Nancy White and Bill Johnston’s Homely for the Holidays. A "Schottische" played by Olaf Sveen constituted the only musical offering this time.

These issues are available from CSTM Back Issues, 224 20th Ave. NW, Calgary, Alta. T2M 1C2. See the Mail Order Service catalogue or the website (address on p.1) for pricing. [JL]