

# The Toads and the Truck

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The musical score is written in 3/4 time and consists of seven staves of music. The lyrics are written below the notes. Chord symbols (Am, Am7, Dm, E7) are placed above the staff lines. The score includes repeat signs at the beginning and end of the piece.

Am Am7  
Come sit for a while as a tale I un - ra - vel,  
When some folks con - si - der the role of the truck, it

Dm Am  
Con - cer - ning the toads that sit out on the gra - vel  
In - spires them to ga - ther up toads in a buc - ket

Am Am7  
Or con - crete or as - phalt where ve - hi - cles tra - vel  
And take them to where they might have bet - ter luck; it

Dm E7 (2)  
And some - times get struck by a lor - ry.  
Is not, though, the end of my sto - ry,

Dm Am  
For spea - king of toads and of trucks in - tro - du - ces

Dm E7  
A chance to con - si - der the truck's ma - ny u - ses.

Come sit for a while as a tale I unravel,  
Concerning the toads that sit out on the gravel  
Or concrete or asphalt where vehicles travel  
And sometimes get struck by a lorry.  
When some folks consider the role of the truck, it  
Inspires them to gather up toads in a bucket  
And take them to where they might have better luck; it  
Is not, though, the end of my story,  
For speaking of toads and of trucks introduces  
A chance to consider the truck's many uses.

Perhaps it is carrying great hides of leather  
For tailors and cobblers to fasten together  
As jackets and boots to keep out the cold weather  
That comes with the storms of November.  
Now, as it proceeds down the road, the truck passes  
The source of its leather where cattle eat grasses  
On fields that were drained by the land-owning classes  
In ages none here can remember.  
The pastures grew large, the Great Fen was receding,  
And parts of six counties were lost to toads' breeding.

Perhaps it is bearing a tankful of oil  
For heating the houses both common and royal  
That once would stay warm burning wood from our soil  
Before the great deforestation.  
But, back when the tongue known to Shakespeare was spoken,  
We cut down such forests so noble and oaken  
That what is remaining is only a token  
Of that which once covered our nation.  
The woods that we cut for the forge and the smelter  
Had meadows and streams once, and toads could find shelter.

*Continued overleaf*

Perhaps it is laden with piles of lumber  
For building the houses that seem beyond number  
In new towns and suburbs where people can slumber,  
Then drive to the cities' congestion.  
In fields where bees once made honey and waxes  
We sent in the workers with saws, picks, and axes  
To push through the roadways we pay for with taxes  
On projects we too rarely question.  
The motorway lanes that we drive without stopping  
Are covering lands where the toads once were hopping.

Perhaps it is bringing transformers and cables  
To service our houses, our shops, and our stables.  
The coal that we burn at the stations enables  
Us all to have access to power.  
But, as our good Nottingham coal oxidizes,  
The sulphur within it burns too, then it rises,  
And, mixed with nitrogenous oxides, comprises  
The gas that has turned our rain sour.  
When we know the riverbank screams with pain during  
Each storm, can we hope to see tadpoles maturing?

Perhaps in its rush down the road after dark it  
Is bringing up food from the south Common Market.  
The greengrocer waits for the driver to park it,  
Then unloads the cabbage and marrows.  
But here, as in Europe, most men in possession  
Of land who have chosen the farming profession  
Attempt the same planting each spring in succession,  
As each year their choice of seed narrows.  
Insecticides used upon plants of such breeding  
Are killing the bugs on which toads might be feeding.

Perhaps it's removing a landowner's treasure,  
Collected through decades of study and leisure,  
That now is donated to give us all pleasure  
At places the public can visit.  
Such antiques, mementos, and artifacts sit in  
Our churches and halls, that it truly is written  
That one great museum is all of Great Britain,  
And this is our glory -- or is it?  
For shall we save porringers crafted of gold or  
Of tin, and lose species millennia older?

Come sit for a while as I finish this tale  
Of how these improvements to highway and rail  
May speed the dispatch of Her Majesty's mail  
But silence the spring's early voices.  
And, if you see toads with their pouches inflating,  
Informing the world that they're ready for mating,  
But you think there's danger in their congregating  
Near trucks, then consider your choices.  
And, if you would move them, remember my singing:  
Fear less the truck's wheels than what the truck's bringing.

Inspired by the work of the Welsh herpetologist Paul Gittins, as reported in Out Of Town magazine (Great Britain), August 1983.

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