

Northwest Passage

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As you listen to this song, underline the names of places and people. Listen a second time to hear what Stan Rogers, the songwriter, thought about the early European explorers, and what he felt he had in common with them. Use a highlighter to mark expressions that describe the land that would eventually become known as Canada.

*Ah, for just one time, I would take the Northwest Passage
To find the hand of Franklin reaching for the Beaufort Sea;
Tracing one warm line through a land so wide and savage
And make a Northwest Passage to the sea.*

Westward from the Davis Strait 'tis there 'twas said to lie
The sea route to the Orient for which so many died;
Seeking gold and glory, leaving weathered, broken bones
And a long-forgotten lonely cairn of stones.

*Ah, for just one time, I would take the Northwest Passage
To find the hand of Franklin reaching for the Beaufort Sea;
Tracing one warm line through a land so wide and savage
And make a Northwest Passage to the sea.*

Three centuries thereafter, I take passage overland
In the footsteps of brave Kelso [Kelsey], where his "sea of flowers" began
Watching cities rise before me, then behind me sink again
This tardiest explorer, driving hard across the plain.

*Ah, for just one time, I would take the Northwest Passage
To find the hand of Franklin reaching for the Beaufort Sea;
Tracing one warm line through a land so wide and savage
And make a Northwest Passage to the sea.*

And through the night, behind the wheel, the mileage clicking west
I think upon Mackenzie, David Thompson and the rest
Who cracked the mountain ramparts and did show a path for me
To race the roaring Fraser to the sea.

*Ah, for just one time, I would take the Northwest Passage
To find the hand of Franklin reaching for the Beaufort Sea;
Tracing one warm line through a land so wide and savage
And make a Northwest Passage to the sea.*

How then am I so different from the first men through this way?
Like them, I left a settled life; I threw it all away
To seek a Northwest Passage at the call of many men
To find there but the road back home again.

*Ah, for just one time, I would take the Northwest Passage
To find the hand of Franklin reaching for the Beaufort Sea;
Tracing one warm line through a land so wide and savage
And make a Northwest Passage to the sea.*

Words and Music by Stan Rogers

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