

THE BLACK GANG SHANTY

Jon Heslop



*Dig! Swing! Throw it in! Keep those fires burning!
Dig! Swing! Throw it in! Keep those engines turning!*

Far below the waterline
where the black gang spend their time
out of sight and out of mind
in a ship that's driven by steam.

Keep her steaming night and day,
keep her steaming all the way.
How a stoker earns his pay
in a ship that's driven by steam!

Every hour we shift a ton,
next hour shift another one.
Sleep is our idea of fun
in a ship that's driven by steam

Filthy black from coal and oil,
how the black gang sweat and toil
just to make the water boil
in a ship that's driven by steam.

When at last I get ashore
I'll scrub the coal from every pore
and never be a stoker more
on a ship that's driven by steam.

When I'm dead and in the clay,
Hell won't frighten me, no way!
In boiler rooms I've spent my days.