

THE MILITARY ROAD

They made a road
They came from the south
and cut a road
Straight through our hills they came
with harsh voices & strange faces
Barbarians they were - and yet they call us that
They made a road that cut right through
our soft hills and forests - a hard road
The like of which we had not seen before
It slashed through our land like a sword
It cut past lochans - sweet silent water
still and quiet - across the peat
That makes our rivers soft and brown
the soft peat that feeds the grass
That feeds our shaggy beasts our goats & cows
the peat that feeds our fires
The peat we cut and stack and dry and store and use
to smoke our meat and keep us warm
They came and built this road across the moors
across the peat hags over the bogs
A hard straight road across the soft rolling fells

Our roads swell and dip they curve around the gentle earth
but this road ran straight and hard
It came from the south through the passes
past Lochindorb (and that's been a hard place in its time)
These men were different - strange and hard and harsh
for they beat the passes and conquered the soft peat bogs
Like they had beaten us and conquered the clans
And so they made a road not for us folk but for the mil-it-ary
A hard straight road that they could swagger along, eying us
our livestock our women our land
Which they came and took for themselves with swords and guns
and strange ways and harsh laws and hard roads
And this is how they took our land

They came lording it - Butcher's men and General Wade's men
to make a road of stone such as we had never seen
We'd seen them before though
butchering our men our boys down Culloden way
That day that saw the end of our way of life, our dreams
desires for sovereignty, our hopes of liberty
Now they trample our lives in the hard stone dust of their road
that leads so straight across the sweet heather
Over and round our singing hills - Aitnoch and the Knock of Braemoray
now bound in stone and across our rivers too
They matched themselves against the mighty rushing Findhorn
by the gorge at Dulsie - spanned in stone

continued over

Hard static power of immovable stone - such power though
as they wielded their armies of men here and there
Along the straight roads hard down through the woods of Cawdor
to ford the Muckle Burn to bridge the Alt Dearg
Then straight across the mighty Nairn by Clephanton
and all with their hard roads - and so hard by Loch Flemington
And straight across to Ardersier and the obscene promontory
that now pushes like a hard prick straight out into the Firth
Straight out towards the sweet and gentle vale of Rosemarkie

Their Fort "George" that thrusts forth into the sea with its straight lines
and banks and barracks and thrusting snouts of cannon
This ugly power that rapes and conquers and overkills and squats there
ready to rise and issue forth along these military roads to kill again
The fat and bloated Fort that "keeps the peace" and subjugates the land
and with its foreign presence rules these shores
- no wonder we rose and fought

And so our land was beaten down, conquered and bound
and held in chains of pounded stone
Our people robbed our peace abused our country ravaged
our culture curbed our land desecrated our homes despoiled
Our way-of-life devastated our bounty devoured our goods plundered
our folk evicted our villages sacked our farms pillaged
Our stocks and stores stripped our bodies scourged our women raped
our rights violated our men killed or conscripted into the english army
Our children forced into service our clans put under edict our law despised
our names denied our dress proscribed our land taken by foreigners
Our religion changed our language despised our people divided
by the very same mil-it-ary men who walk this new hard road
So they made a road
So they came from the south and cut a road
So they came and took a country and made a sort of peace.