

Ravens

August 9-11, 1978

The news was pretty bad today
Did you hear the old pope died?
The cardinals are counting their chances
And looking benign
The Titanic sank on the TV tube
And the West Coast is under water
Me I'm here with ravens
On my mind

D...
C G
G D
C G
D
C G
G D
F Em
D

I sat myself down and poured me a drink
Determined to see it clear
What the hell any of this
Might be about
Are we toys in the hands of a crazy man
Or food just fit for buzzards?
Does anybody see the candle
Before it's out?

Keep your eye on the raven
High against the snow

F D
F D

This I had from an Indian lad
Who said I was wasting my time
He said the Spirit's the only one
Who knows anything at all
And I was wishing I'd a been raised with that
With the wind in wild places
Instead of this schoolman's paradox
Of the Fall

There's people being born and people being buried
Faster than a man can count 'em
The ways of the Lord are a wonder, so they say
As hand in hand with the monkey band
We pick our way through the slaughter
Reading the raven's innards
And trying to pray

Keep your eye on the raven
High against the snow

Written two years after finishing my novel Land of Precious Snow, this song shows traces of that book's struggle to reconcile my Catholic upbringing with Buddhist equanimity.