

The Earth We Called Home (The Acadian Grandmother)

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Spring/Summer 2008

On the wide windy shores of a place called Belleisle	G - C G
The sun on our fields we vowed no more to roam	C G Em D
We gave thanks to God and we brought in the harvest	G - C G
In a green pleasant corner of earth we called home	C G D G
Where the bright water flows and the meadowlark sings	C - G -
Far from the scheming and quarrels of kings	G C Am D
Till a dire decree from a grim governor's hand	G - C G
Poisoned the air of our green pleasant land	C G D G

On the 5th of September, the year '55
Came a message of doom that we could not survive
Our lands to be forfeit, our homes to be burned
And all to be shipped out and not to return
 A day of calamity on that far shore
 Wives torn from husbands and never seen more
From the boat came a terrible scene to my eye
As the smoke from our houses blackened the sky

Oh the shores of Belleisle, so peaceful and green
Grew small in the distance, wild water between
In the shadow of muskets and rough men at arms
We watched the sun set on our dreams and our farms
 By nightfall I searched for the last dying spark
 Fluttering, drifting, and drowned in the dark
By the next morning no one could see more
Of our homes or our fields on that sorrowful shore

To far distant countries our people were sped
To live among strangers and struggle for bread
In the forty long years that I've lived to see
I have never forgotten my fair Acadie
 So I give you this handful of earth, keep it well
 For I'll not again see my house on the hill
Carry it with you until you may roam
To the green pleasant corner of earth we called home

In the autumn of 1755, after refusing to take an oath of loyalty to the British crown, thousands of French residents were expelled from the Canadian province of Acadia, in a massive deportation known as the "Grand Derangement." Many of those exiled went to Louisiana, where they became known as Cajuns.

Andrée and I wrote this song to honor her Cajun ancestors.