

The Mill Workers (Poem)

On foot or bike, with bus or train, they came from far and wide,
Destined to toil from dawn till dusk in that mill by Laganside,
Still drowsed with sleep, or chilled to bone, with sleet or snow or rain,
They came to earn their daily bread, each day it was the same.

They left their young tucked up in bed, a fire burning in the grate,
A pot of tea stewed on the hob, then off before they were late,
For them the giant gate slammed shut, if in time they did not come,
It meant a broken pay next week, if to work they did not run.

To spin or weave to toil and sweat, for two score years and ten,
Then end up on the scrap heap, worked out shells of men,
Thrown out, neglected, cast aside, to pass the time till death,
Relieved them of the boredom of sitting daily by the hearth.

Don Watters