

THE SONG OF THE LOOM

First light at the window, she is quick to rise,
The shuttle moving in her hand, the dust still in her eyes,
One foot rocks the cradle and one foot works the loom,
The beating of the treadle starts to fill the tiny room.
*There's ghosts in the kitchen, we're four to a bed,
The loom will be singing and we shall have, we shall have bread.*

She's weaving to remember, she's weaving to forget,
She's weaving for forgiveness, she's weaving for regret.
Her fingers fly to spin a spell against the workhouse door,
A tapestry of peace now that father's gone to war.
*Now he may be lying or he may be dead,
The loom will be singing and we shall have, we shall have bread.*

There's bombazine for mourning, worsted for the cold,
There's camlets for India and gauzes for the old.
There's school for other children, and learning for the wise,
We live and die for fringes, sell our souls for brighter dyes.
*Our black is much blacker, our red is more red,
The loom will be singing we shall have, we shall have bread.*

Rain is falling on the yard, the privies overflow,
You cannot tell your children what they already know,
The room is dark, the knocking of the rent man at the door,
Listening for the echo of her feet upon the floor.
The beautiful rattle that lives in my head,
*The loom will be singing we shall have, we shall have bread.
We shall have, we shall have bread.*

MAGS CHALCRAFT-ISLAM