

The Hurricane That Had No Name

© Ken Ward, September 22, 2006

Nineteen thirty-eight
down in Westerly
a warm September
on the beach
Kids digging holes
in the dunes of sand
skiffs sailing out on a reach
Then the wind came in
like the hand of God
shattered that town
with an iron rod
What wasn't wrecked
went up in flame
in the hurricane
that had no name

*Oh the water is wide
and I can't see over
to the other side
land of honey and clover
on the other shore*

The fleet sailed out of
Jerusalem
private men most of them
fished alone
The nets were dropped
and the lines went out
every man faced that
storm on his own
And then wind picked up
like the hand of God
opened up those boats
like you split a pea pod
Each man who survived
would stake his claim
on that hurricane
that had no name

chorus

It hit Connecticut hard
and up in Vermont
sugar maples came down
all through the highlands
The wrath and the fury
fell like wolves on sheep
and ravaged my own
Rhode Island
And when the wind came down
like the hand of God
and the eye passed over
the town of Weekapaug
Those alive saw stars
shining overhead
one woman didn't know
if she was live or dead

chorus

Eight kids and the driver
on the Jamestown bus
after school heading homeward
they drove
They said afterwards
it was a "killer wave"
swept that driver and those kids
out into Mackerel Cove
When the wind struck down
like the hand of God
the driver said the colors
of the water looked odd
He could save only one
had to live with the shame
brought to him by that hurricane
that had no name

chorus

Houses tore loose
and carried people away
like leaves rushing down
in a New Hampshire brook
When the sun shown down on
New England next day
the people realized
what that hurricane took
And when the wind rose up
like the hand of God
that conductor gripped his throttle
like he's holding Aaron's rod
He brought the Boston train
inch by inch to land
and a hundred souls did not that day
head to the promised land

*Though the water is wide,
now I can see over
to the other side
land of honey and clover
on the other side*

And when the wind came down
like the hand of God
over forest and town
it ran roughshod
Three hundred died
in Little Rhody that day
when the waters rose up
in Narragansett Bay

*Though the water is wide,
now I will cross over
to the other side
land of honey and clover
on the other side*

A story of the hurricane of 1938.
All facts drawn from eyewitness reports.

*photo, Ken at home town, Providence, RI hur-
ricane barrier, built in the aftermath of the 1938
hurricane.*

