

# The Fans Were Singing “Hope Eyrie”

Lyrics: Gary McGath, Copyright 2018

Music: Eric Bogle, “And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda”

Leslie Fish, “Hope Eyrie”

When I was a child, I would watch the TV and witness the first rocket launches.  
The countdown and liftoff were thrilling to see as I sat there so rapt on my haunches.  
Then Kennedy said, “It’s the nation’s high noon. To be all we can, we must go to the moon.  
We’ll beat out the Russians if we do it soon.” And the U.S.A. aimed for the sky.

And the fans would be singing “Hope Eyrie”  
When recalling those first trips to space.  
Through the shouts and the cheers, through the worries and fears,  
We knew we’d been first in the race.

And how I remember that wonderful night. Could anyone ever be gladder?  
Neil Armstrong declared mankind’s future was bright as he stood at the base of the ladder.  
The risk was tremendous. The cost was as well. If things should go wrong, it would all end in Hell.  
But the trip was a triumph, a legend to tell, and they came back as heroes to Earth.

And Leslie was writing “Hope Eyrie,”  
So the fans would tell their children when,  
And a new ship prepared to blast through the air  
And go to the Moon once again.

For three years and a half we sent craft after craft to that cold world of darkness and silence.  
But on Earth people said so much spending was daft, it could better fight hunger and violence.  
And in Seventy-three all the rockets stood still. There were more needs on Earth that our dollars could fill.

We’d beaten the Russians but now had no will to keep making the same trip again.

Yet the fans started singing “Hope Eyrie,”  
Sure that going back wouldn’t take long,  
But the cost was too high to rise out past the sky.  
And all that was left was the song.

Now we are exploring the secrets of Mars, but only machines are arriving.  
They don’t have to come back from a planet so far, and they’re better than us at surviving.  
Old astronauts once walked upon our own Moon. No others are planning to go out there soon.  
The young people ask if they gave us some boon, and I ask myself the same question.

Still the fans are singing “Hope Eyrie”  
For the astronauts who heard the call,  
But as year follows year, more old men disappear.  
Someday none will have walked there at all.

(Tune: Chorus of “Hope Eyrie”)

For the Eagle has landed. Tell your children when.  
Time won’t drive us down to dust again.