

## **On vacation in Patea**

We waited, my brother and I  
Expecting anytime his head  
To pop out from the boiler's mouth.  
We had headed South  
To this huge factory shed  
Lying the length of the sky  
In Patea.

Our father, the Inspector,  
Clad in his boiler suit  
Had clambered inside,  
His face with quiet pride  
In a job; for him, it was beaut  
To protect the industrial worker  
In Patea.

A light tapping we heard  
From deep within.  
The huge monster, silent;  
The manager, confident  
The machine could soon begin  
To roar again with dread  
In Patea.

On vacation from school  
We learned to respect  
The lessons of safety.  
His authority was mainly  
In experience, checked  
In the light of the law  
In Patea.

Out came his head, dirt  
Around his cheeks and sweat  
On his brow. Crawling  
Onto the floor, standing,  
He said calmly, in neat  
Phrases, short and curt  
In Patea,

“Corrosion, there is  
On some of those tubes.  
Repair them please!”  
For, if we are to ease  
Away from the safety blues  
Clear action is all our biz  
In Patea.

Dave Feickert  
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The best safety training I ever had was when, as a kid, our father took my brother and I with him on factory visits during the school holidays.