

Chapter 10 – Transcripts

Activity 1: Raising Awareness

The Complaints Choir concept began with two Finnish artists who were working in Birmingham, England. They pulled together the first ever Complaints Choir. Then Helsinki and Hamburg started one. Hosts of the radio program *As It Happens*, Carol Off and Barbara Budd, who introduced the choir on the air, gathered close to 80 singers in the Glen Gould theater in Toronto on February 21, 2007, to sing the song that was written from the hundreds of complaints sent in to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) listeners. The composer and lyricist is Eric Robertson, who accompanies on the piano. The choir's conductor is Kelly Galbraith.

A performance of the song, which is the eighth choir listed, can be viewed at the following Web sites:

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yChwJyOL9vc>
- <http://www.complaintschoir.org/choirs.html>

As It Happens Canadian Complaints Choir

VERSE 1

I just think that you ought to know,
Canada leaves me feeling low;
Winter slush; people
Who don't flush; passport
Applications that are slow:

Chorus

Why are my feet so cold—tell me why do . . .
My hands feel so numb?
I hate plastic bags; I
Hate the word called Referendum;
Hidden cell phone fees;
Expensive cars that have no signal lights;
Why can't things just be right?

SHOUT OUTS 1

I can't open childproof bottles!
Whatever happened to being polite?
Why can't people use apostrophes properly?
Air Canada sucks.

VERSE 2

I hate car alarms that will not quit;
Stephen Harper's clothes that just don't fit;
Static on my cat;
Vomit on the mat;
The single men who can't commit.

Chorus

Why are my feet so cold—tell me why do . . .
My hands feel so numb?
I hate plastic bags; I
Hate the word called Referendum;
Hidden cell phone fees;
Expensive cars that have no signal lights;
Why can't things just be right?

SHOUT OUTS 2

The other line moves faster!
Everything's so hard. Can't something be easy?
My boss is pathetically pedantic.
Why don't people have proper escalator etiquette?

VERSE 3

Fierce dogs used as weapons of attack; why
Can't I be as rich as Conrad Black?
Spam spam, spam, I'm fed up

I am; won't someone
Please, oh please, give me my office back?

Chorus

Why are my feet so cold—tell me why do . . .
My hands feel so numb?
I hate plastic bags; I
Hate the word called Referendum;
Hidden cell phone fees;
Expensive cars that have no signal lights;
Why can't things just be right?

Chorus reprise

Why are my feet so cold—tell me why do . . .
My hands feel so numb?
I hate plastic bags; I
Hate the word called Referendum;
Hidden cell phone fees;
Expensive cars that have no signal lights;
Why can't things just be right?
Why can't things just be right?

Vocabulary

Feeling low is an idiom that means “feeling mildly depressed.”

Slush is partly melted snow, often mixed with dirt.

Pedantic means “overly concerned with small details.”

A *referendum* is a political term that asks the people to vote directly for or against a proposal. Because this word is capitalized, it is likely that this term refers to the 1995 Quebec Referendum that asks voters to decide if Quebec should secede from Canada and become an independent state.

Stephen Harper is the twenty-second Prime Minister of Canada.

Conrad Black is a controversial figure in Canada who acquired great wealth in the newspaper industry.

Spam is the commercial advertising that is sent as e-mail.

<2>Activity 2: Recognizing and Responding to Indirect Complaints

1. It's not fair that he didn't get the promotion. He works harder than anyone.
2. You know what? I left my lunch at home again! I think I am losing my mind.*
3. Don't you hate it when the weather is beautiful all week, then Saturday rolls around and it's grey and cold outside?
4. Why is it that every time I get into a line at the store, the other lines move twice as fast?
5. I can't stand how noisy it is in here. I can barely hear myself think.
6. This is not my day. The one day I didn't make it to class, the teacher gave a 100-point quiz.
7. I can't believe how much airfare costs these days.
8. I am sick and tired of sitting at home every day.

* "losing my mind" = I'm going crazy