Tom O'Leary

Tom O'Leary's dog Spike was ten years old.
Tom was seventy two.
Using the ratio of seven to one in human terms.
Spike was the same age too.

Tom had been a shearer for many years.
All his working life.
Never in one place for very long.
Never had time to find a wife.

He had shorn sheep on the Darling run.
On stations far and wide.
Around Louth, Tilpa, Wilcannia
And places across the great divide..

Tom and Spike were well known.
In watering holes outback.
If Spike was refused entry.
The publican had to try another tack.

If Spike wasn't welcome locals would leave the bar.
Buy some grog at a liquor shop and drink it in the park
The publican soon found the error of his ways

Spike was carried in shoulder high, blimey wot a lark..

Now Tom had been shearing for forty years.
And his back was giving out, together with his shoulders.
And his feet were [plagued with gout
His shearing days were over, no doubt about that
The last shed done, was down at Captains Flat.

He decided to travel back and visit stations he had known
Places like Byrock, Willow Tree and Gulargambone.
Called in to see old mates at sheds in Gunnedah and Narrabri.
Ventured further west and ended up in Collarenebri..

Misty Ridge at Quirindi the family of the Clarkes.
Wandered far to Binnaway , ended up in Parkes.
His old A Model Ford plugged on to Bingara

Jack Colliss, Whiddon Laurieton

Tom O'Leary

and Inverell
How long would old Henry last, who could tell.

To got to thinking about Henry's age.
Born in nineteen thirty, he was the same age too.
No wonder the old fella was tired, time to take a break.
Last stop today was visiting friends at Dunedoo.

They suggested Tom stop and rest a bit.
Have a holiday, how about a farm sit.
All ya gotta do is feed the chooks, check the fences.
A piece of cake for Tom, if you're up to it.

So started Toms career of farm sitting.
Word got around, he was in demand.
Hardly kept up the pace,
Farm sitting across the land.

A mechanic on a large property, gave Henry an overhaul.
Did up the engine, gearbox and didn't charge Tom at all.
The panel shop in town offered to spray Henry free.
They loved old cars that's why there was no fee.

Now Tom and Henry Ford continued north to the far outback village of Aramac.
Tom hadn't been there for years, he was pleased to be back.
Now Aramac is in Queensland in 100 miles north of Longreach
In the south east you could say…
A train travels slowly from Barcaldine to Aramac.
The driver offered a swaggy a lift who said.
"No thanks mate, I'm in a hurry, wanta get there today."

That's Aramac, nice and slow, not one to put on a show.
Tom and Spike were farm sitting ten miles out of town.
Drove into town on Friday night, parked just near the local store.

Jack Colliss, Whiddon Laurieton

Tom O'Leary

3 / 3

Was really busy at the pub, must have been thirty folk or more.

Toby Langdon the publican shouted Tom a beer.
"Good Ta see ya mate, it's been many a year."
Now everyone in Aramac knows everyone else.
They don't lock house or car.
Even when drinking at the local bar.
Every person in Aramac was true blue honest.
As honest as the day is long.
Toby was bashing Toms ear about this honesty bit.
Tom said "I know all that, ya better put it into a song."

So young Billy Pearson grabbed his guitar and let go.
"We are the people of Aramac the honest and tha best.
Also bloody good drinkers, if yaw anna put us ta the test.
We don't lock our houses or cars no matter wot tha weather.
Come ta think of it we don' lockup our women either.

It was late at night, Toby asked Tom if he wanted a bed.
"No thanks mate, she'll be right I'll be on my way".
Toby watched Tom climb into the ford.
Then out again onto the running board.
He climbed into the back seat fussing about.
Rummaging around and tossing rubbish out.
Spike was whining and started to bark.
What was Tom doing messing around in the dark.
Toby walked over, "What's up Tom, lost something I guess."
"Na" "Tom said with a frown, 'Ya always talkin' about tha honest folk in town."
"That's true Tom. That's how I feel."
Spike growled at Toby. Tom yelled, "heel boy, Heel."
"So what Tom, what have you lost."?
"Nothing mate,"cept some mongrel stole me a flamin' steerin' wheel."

Jack Colliss, Whiddon Laurieton