

The Streets of New York

The Wolfe Tones

I was eighteen years old
When I went down to Dublin,
With a fistfull of money
And a cartload of dreams,
Take your time
Said me father,
Stop rushing like hell,
And remember all is not
What it seems to be,
For there's fellas would cut ye
For the coat on yer back,
Or the watch that ye got
From yer mother,
So take care me young buck-o
And mind yourself well,
And will ye give this wee note
To me brother.

At the time Uncle Benjy
Was a policeman in Brooklyn,
And me father the youngest
Looked after the farm,
When a phonecall from America
Said 'Send the lad over',
Well the old fella said
'It wouldn't do any harm',
For I spent me life working
This dirty old ground,
For a few pints of porter
And the smell of a pound,
And sure maybe there's something
You learn loyalty,
And you can bring it back home,
Make a duty on me .

So I landed at Kennedy,
And a big yellow taxi
Carried me and me bags
Through the streets and the rain,
Well me poor heart was thumpin'
Around with excitement,
And I hardly ever heard
What the driver was saying,
We came in the Shore Parkway
To the Flatlands of Brooklyn,
To my Uncles apartment
On East 53rd,
I was fellin' so happy
I was hummin' a song,
And I sang,
You're as free as a bird'.

Well to shorten the story
What I found out that day,
Was that Benjy got shot down
In an uptown foray,
And while I was flyin'

My way to New York,
Poor Benjy was lying
In a cold city morgue,
Well I phoned up the old fella
Told him the news,
I could tell he could hardly
Stand up in his shoes,
And he wept as he said
'Go ahead with the plan',
And not to forget
Be a proud Irishman.

So I went up to Nellies
Beside Fordham Road,
And I started to learn
About lifting the load,
But the heaviest thing
I carried that year,
Was the bittersweet thoughts
Of my hometown so dear,
I went home that December
'Cause the old fella died,
Had to borrow some money
From a Phil on the side,
And all the bright flowers
And brass couldn't hide,
The poor wasted face
Of me father.

I sold up the old farmyard
For what it was worth,
And into me bag
Stuck a handful of earth,
Then I boarded a train
And I caught me a plane,
And I found myself back
In the US again,
Its been twenty two years
Since I set foot in Dublin,
Me kids know to use
The correct knife and fork,
But I never will forget
The green grass and the rivers,
As I keep law and order
On the streets of New York.