

Tones Wolfe

"The Streets Of New York"

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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 my father, "stop rushing like Hell,

And remember all's not what it seems to be.

For there's fellas who'd cut you for the coat on your back,

Or that watch that you got from your mother.

So take care, my young bucko, and mind yourself well.

And would you give this wee note to my brother."

At the time, Uncle Benjy was a policeman in Brooklyn,

And my father, the youngest, looked after the farm.

Til a phone call from America said "Send the lad over."

And my old fella said, "Sure, t'wouldn't do any harm.

For I've spent my 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'll learn or you'll see,

And you can bring it back home, make it easier on me."

So, I landed at Kennedy, and a big yellow taxi

Carried me and my bags through the streets and the rain.

Well, my poor heart was thumping around with

excitement,

And I hardly even heard what the driver was saying.

We came in the Shore Parkway through the flatlands in
Brooklyn,

To my uncle's apartment on East 53rd.

I was feeling so happy, I was humming 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 flying my way to New York,

Poor Benjy was lying in a cold city morgue.

Well, I called up my old fella, told him the news.

I could tell he could hardly stand up in his shoes.

And he wept as he told me go ahead with the plan,

And not to forget, be a proud Irish man.

So, I went up to Nellie's beside Fordham Road,

And I started to learn about lifting my load.

But the heaviest thing that I carried that year

Was the bittersweet thoughts of my hometown so dear.

I went home that December cause my old fella died.

I had to borrow the money from a fella on the side.

And all the bright flowers and brass couldn't hide

The poor, wasted face of my father.

I sold off the old far yard for what it was worth,

And into my bag stuck a handful of earth.

Then I boarded a train and I caught me a plane,

And I found myself back in the U.S. again.

It's been twenty-two years since I set foot in Dublin.

My kids know to use the correct knife and fork.

But I'll never forget the green grass and the rivers,

As I keep law and order in the streets of New York

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