

The Pogues

"Thousands Are Sailing"

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The island it is silent now
But the ghosts still haunt the waves
And the torch lights up a famished man
Who fortune could not save

Did you work upon the railroad
Did you rid the streets of crime
Were your dollars from the white house
Were they from the five and dime

Did the old songs taunt or cheer you
And did they still make you cry
Did you count the months and years
Or did your teardrops quickly dry

Ah, no, says he, 'twas not to be
On a coffin ship I came here
And I never even got so far
That they could change my name

Thousands are sailing
Across the western ocean
To a land of opportunity
That some of them will never see
Fortune prevailing
Across the western ocean
Their bellies full
Their spirits free
They'll break the chains of poverty
And they'll dance

In Manhattan's desert twilight
In the death of afternoon
We stepped hand in hand on Broadway
Like the first man on the moon

And "The Blackbird" broke the silence
As you whistled it so sweet
And in Brendan Behan's footsteps
I danced up and down the street

Then we said goodnight to Broadway
Giving it our best regards
Tipped our hats to Mister Cohen
Dear old Times Square's favorite bard

Then we raised a glass to JFK
And a dozen more besides
When I got back to my empty room
I suppose I must have cried

Thousands are sailing
Again across the ocean
Where the hand of opportunity
Draws tickets in a lottery
Postcards we're mailing
Of sky-blue skies and oceans
From rooms the daylight never sees
Where lights don't glow on Christmas trees
But we dance to the music
And we dance

Thousands are sailing
Across the western ocean
Where the hand of opportunity
Draws tickets in a lottery
Where e'er we go, we celebrate
The land that makes us refugees
From fear of Priests with empty plates
From guilt and weeping effigies
And we dance

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