

Tom Russell, Blue Wing

He had a blue wing tattooed on his shoulder
Well it might have been a blue bird I don't know
But he'd get stone drunk and talk about Alaska
The salmon boats and 45 below

He said he got that blue wing up in Walla Walla
And his cellmate there was Little Willy John
And Willy he was once a great blues singer
And Wing and Willy wrote 'em up a song. They said

CHORUS:

It's dark in here; can't see the sky
But I look at this blue wing and I close my eyes
And I fly away beyond these walls
Up above the clouds where the rain don't fall
On a poor man's dream.

They paroled Blue Wing in August, of 1963
He moved north picking apples to the town of Wenatchee
Then winter finally caught him in a run down trailer park
On the south side of Seattle where the days grow gray and dark

And he drank and he dreamt of visions when the salmon still ran free
And his fathers' fathers crossed that wild old Bering Sea
And the land belonged to everyone and there were old songs yet to sing
Now it's narrowed down to a cheap hotel and a tattooed prison wing

CHORUS:

Well he drank his way to LA, and that's where he died
And no one knew his Christian name and there was no one there to cry
But I dreamt there was a funeral, a preacher and a cheap pine box
And half way through the service, Blue Wing began to talk. He said

CHORUS:

Hey hey, On a poor man's dream
Hey hey, On a poor man's dream.