

Wolfe Tones, The Streets Of New York

I was eighteen years old, when I went down to Dublin
with a fistful 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 fellows would cut you for the coat on your back
Or the watch that you got from your mother
So take care me young buck-o and mind yourself well
And will you 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 phone call from America said 'Send the lad over'
And the ould fella said sure it wouldn't do any harm
For I spoent 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 easy 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 pumping around with excitement
And I hardly even heard what the driver was saying
We came in the short parkway to 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 in a downtown foray
And while I was flyng my way to New York
Poor Benjy was lying in a cold city morgue
Well I phoned up the ould 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 to be a proud Irishman

So I went up to Nelly's beside Fordham Road
And I started to learn about lifting the load
But the healthiest thing that I carried that year
Was the bitter sweet thoughts of my home town so dear
I went home that December 'cause the old fella died
Had to borrow the money from Phil on the side
And all the bright flowers and grass couldn't hide
The poor wasted face of my father

I sold up the old farmyard 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
The 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