

Elvis Costello, The Night Before Larry Was Stretched

Oh, the night before Larry was stretched
Well the boys they all paid him a visit
A bit in their sacks too they fetched
For they sweated their duds till they rivered
For Larry was always the lad
When a boy was condemned to the Squeezer
Would fence all the duds that he had
For to help his poor friend to a sneezer -
- And warm his own god 'fore he died

Well the boys they came crowding in fast
And they threw all their stools 'round about him
Six glims round his trap-case was placed
For he couldn't be well-waked without them

When one of them asked, "Could he die
Without having duly repented?"
Said Larry, "That's all in the eye
And first by the clergy invented -
- For to get a fat lid for themselves"

Oh and Algie cut up like a pie:
"I may not from me buddy be parted."
"You're in the wrong box, then, says I,
For bless me if they're so hard-hearted

"A chalk on the back of your neck
Is all that Jack Catch does to give you
Then mind not such trifle's effect
Oh why should the likes of them grieve you? -
- And now boys, come tip us the deck."

Well the cards being called for they played
Until Larry found one of them cheated
[?] A godflew was napperly made [?]
For the boy he being easily heated

"Oh, hold me the hokey, you thief!
I'll scuffle your knob with me dardle!
You cheat me because I'm in grief
Ah, but soon I'll be molish and muddle -
- And leave you your claret to drink"

Then the clergy came in with his boon
And he spoke him so smooth and so civil
Larry tipped him A Kilmaven wink
And he pitched his big wig to the devil

Then sighing he threw back his head
For to get a sweet drop of the bottle
And dutiful sighing he said,
"Oh the hemp 'twill be soon 'round me throttle -
- And choke me poor windpipe to death.

"Oh then sure it's the best way to die
[?] Oh the dead are the better the living [?]
For now in the gallows is hiding
A journey that's surely to heaven."

But what harasses Larry the most
And makes his soul poor melancholy
Is he thinks of the time when his ghost
It will come in a sheet to Sweet Molly -
- "Oh sure, it'll kill her alive"

So moving, these last words he spoke
We all vented our tears in a shower
For me own part I thought me heart broke
For to see him cut down like a flower

On his travels we watched him next day
The throttler I thought I could kill him
But Larry not one word did say
Nor change did he come to King William -
- And mutter, "His color be White."

When he came to the old Dublin Shed
He was tucked up so neat and so pretty
[?] The rumbler jumped far from his feet [?]
And he died with his face to the city

He came to, but that was all pride
For soon you might see 'twas all over
Soon after the noose was untied
In darkness we waked him in clover -
- And sent him to take his ground sweat

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