

# Ballad Of Mary Foster

Al Stewart

David Foster lives in Gloucester with his family  
Works 'til pay-time, through the day-time, then comes home for tea  
Steak and kidney, then with Sydney to his club and feels free  
They close the bar, he finds his car and then goes home to sleep  
And his wife has been with Rosie, in the parlour where it's cosy  
Watching telly, doing dishes, patching pants and making wishes  
And he'll say "Bill should have wired"  
And "Not tonight dear, I'm too tired"  
And life drifts slowly by in the provinces

Peter Foster goes to Gloucester for his first school day  
Bites his teacher, sees a preacher and is taught to pray  
Sees some birds and learns some words it's very, very rude to say  
Yes, he's rather like his father was in his young day  
And his father has discussions, holding forth about the Russians  
"Will the Red Chinese attack us?"  
"Do we need the Yanks to back us?"  
"And in bed she feels his shoulder, but he grunts and just turns over  
And life drifts slowly by in the provinces

Wedding rings come with strings but love depends on the little things  
"Oh could that still be really you?"  
"Is there anything time can't do?"  
David Foster's been promoted, he's a decent sort  
Peter's gone to Dad's old Public School, it's good for sport  
They've even got a private parking place down in Huntingdon Court  
Maybe soon he'll be a magistrate, the neighbours thought  
Yes, and then he'll teach the beatniks  
And the hang-around-the-street nicks  
And the good-for-nothing loafers  
Who knock girls up on their sofas  
And his wife is quite nice, really  
Though she seems a little dreamy  
Recently...

[Act Two

]I was born and brought up on the east side of town  
And my earliest days they passed quickly  
I would play after school with the kids all around  
In the sun and the dust of the back streets  
Oh, all through my girlhood the war had its day  
And my daddy he would always be leaving  
So my brother and I we would sit by her side  
Telling our tales through the evening  
Oh, I grew with the days and the boys came to call  
In the back shed I learned about kissing  
But I don't think my mother has noticed at all  
For we've heard that my daddy is missing  
Then my school days they were over and I went off to work  
And my mother grew quieter and greyer  
So one day I left her and went off to live  
With Billy, a saxophone player

In our broken down attic we laughed and made love  
And all that we had we were sharing  
Oh, we slept through the day and played into the night  
God, we did as we pleased without caring

Oh but a year's passed away and he's left me one day  
To play in a far away country  
And the sun told my eyes "You've got no place to hide"  
As I waited to be having his baby

Oh I lived in the park and the men passed and stared  
Each wondering which one had lost her  
And one came to ask could he buy me a meal  
And he said he was called David Foster  
We were married that month and I swore to myself  
Somehow I'd pay back what I owed him  
Cooking his supper and cleaning his boots  
Yes, and kidding myself I could love him  
Oh, but now my baby is grown and he's gone out to school  
And he looks very much like his daddy  
And David has buried himself in his work  
And the time on my hands, it hangs heavy

Oh, the neighbours they smile as we pass in the streets  
And they make their remarks on the weather  
But the butcher and baker deliver things now  
And I've stopped going out altogether

Oh, I live by my mirror and stare in my eyes  
Trying to make out who I see there  
But I'm looking at a woman that I can't recognize  
And I don't think she knows me either  
There are lines on her face and her hair is a mess  
And the light in her eyes it grows colder  
In the morning there's nothing will change, ah but yes  
I will be just a little bit older