

My name is John O'Reilly
And my father worked the fields
In the hills of old Kilarny
Where I helped him turn the wheels
My arms grew hard as iron for a boy of 17
And I used my fists for gambling in those wet Kilarny streets

Well the ship left for America and I brought my pack aboard
Said goodbye to my dear Ireland said a prayer to my dear Lord
I fought those sorry guineas in the kitchen they called hell
I fought them for their dollar and those guineas paid me well

[Chorus]

Fair thee well fair Dover
Fair thee well your seasons turn
For my pockets will be jingling on the day of my return
The day of my return

I fought in New York City and I fought the Jersey shore
My gut stayed full of whiskey and my bed stayed full of whores
They called my right a cannonball and my left they called the same
I left em' all lyin' half in blood and half in shame

I met a man on '32 and he stuck out his hand
And he offered me a thousand if I'd fall before his man
I said it could be done but only for another two
He smiled at me and nodded as I stuck it in my shoe

[Chorus]

They rang the bell two times before I let him have my nose
And I let him work my left until my eye was swollen closed
Then I let loose a right that they still talk about today
For that guinea didn't know that I had bet the other way

They covered every dock and every port there on the coast
Looking for that double crosser who had turned into a ghost
But I was on a train my friend that rode the other way
And i'll sail from California back to Dublin one fine day