

Blue Wing

Tom Russell

He had a blue wing tattooed on his shoulder
Well, it might have been a bluebird, I don't know
but he'd get stone drunk and talk about Alaska
The salmon boats and 45 below
Well, he got that blue wing up in Walla Walla
and his cellmate there was a Little Willy John
and Willie, he was once a great blues singer
so Wing & Willie wrote him up a song

(CHORUS)

They sang, it's dark in here, can't see the light
but I look at this blue wing when 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 dreams
They paroled blue wing in August of 1963
He moved north, picking apples in the town of Wenatchee
And then winter finally caught him in a rundown trailer park
on the south side of Seattle where the days grow grey and dark
And he drank and he dreamt a vision of when the seven still ran
free
and his father's fathers crossed that wide old Bering sea
and the land belonged to everyone, and there were old songs yet
to sing
now, it's broken down to a cheap hotel and a tattooed prison wing
Now, it's dark in here... (repeat chorus)
Well, he drank his way to L.A., 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 halfway through the sermon blue wing began to talk
He said, it's dark in here... (repeat chorus)