

THE PASSING OF OLD JACK SHANNON

Seated on me porch gazing unknowingly about
Was I startled to the bone by an eerie sounding shout;
“ Hey you,” said a voice as I looked in quick haste
“ Over here,” came an echo odorously laced;
To this voice I was leary ‘ till heard a muffled belch
Then I reckoned with some certainty, he had to be Welsh;
Looking dumbfounded and wondering if I weren’t going mad –
“ T ‘is here Jack Shannon I am, and I’ll not be thought a cad.”
Well now, yah’ can imagine me feelings at a time like this
A believer in the hereafter, I began to think with remiss,
Yet with courage in me heart and feeling ever the fool
I asked of this apparition if he weren’t in fact a ghoul;
“ Aye,” came me answer in a brisk Gaelic tongue –
Well at that I was fit to be tied, or even hung!!
“ And who T’ is be calling Jack Shannon this fine day, “ I said.
“ Your keeper of the soul and protector from the dread.”
“ And just who T’ is be sending an angel to me ear?”
“ The Dear of course Laddie, The Dear, The Dear.”
“ Why, pray tell, should The Dear be calling after me –
I’m not even ready, as any good spirit should see.”
Now then, I took it upon meself to find out about this thing
No burial would I allow in some unclean Irish ling,
At this I inquired as to me time and date of passing
Feeling certain I could catch him, while subtly procrastating.
“ Tell me then what manner of me death, so I can be pre-pared.”
“ T ‘isn’t allowed Laddie, T’is unholy,” he declared.
“ Why then are yah here, if T ‘isn’t for that reason –
And don’t be playing me a sham, for T ‘isn’t the season.”

“ Laddie, Laddie, you’ve thought me all wrong yah did –
T ‘is here I am by St. Peter to do your Heavenly bid;
Like an oversee’r, I’m sent only to check your soul’s worth
A ticket-taker for St. Pete, here on old Mother Earth.”
Relieved now I was, for I thought me end was near –
“ But yah say not to worry, T’ isn’t anything really to fear?”
“ Aye, Laddie aye, T ‘is confounded I know it must
Confidence in yourself though, and in me you’ll have to trust.”
I started wondering then about all me past sins
Hoping The Dear could see His way to a few nipperkins,
T ‘was then I began tell’n the spirit of me friend ol’ Jingles
Of how we’d fished the days so long, up and down the shingles.
And Mary Margaret of Limerick who passed some time back
She was a grand one she was, Miss Mary and a young Jack,
T ‘was fever brought her down and not a whimper did yah hear
Me Mary was the kindest soul and I loved her O’ so dear,
From thatch to sea and back again all those wretched miles –
“ Do yah think kind Sir, I’ll make the trip to God’s Happy Isles?”
“ Could be Laddie, could be, if you’ve been good in The Dear’s eyes
T ‘isn’t me that’ll judge yah tho, when yah comes time to dies.
I make me report to St. Pete and he’ll make the recommendation
T ‘is up to The Dear however, to reckon your final destination;
Patient yah must be and wait, don’t take on so with your nerves
The Dear knows rightly which of us do and don’t deserves,
Rest easy now Jack Shannon and don’t be such a worry
Say your rosary me Laddie, so you’ll win The Dear’s curry;
T ‘is your prayers that’ll save yah and take yah up above
Sweet words of praise, for yah know – T ‘is you He does love.”
Almost frantic I was that quickly I began me a prayer
When all of a sudden I’m in motion, sitting in me rocking chair,
“ O’ praise to The Dear, praise be His,” I said –

And I began to wonder if I weren't already dead.
Just then I opened me eyes and a white rose lay in me lap;
Well, I thought, I must've taken me a bit of a little nap.
“ Aye, Laddie aye, T 'was sleep yah finally did go –
But T is over for yah now, as you'll soon becoming to know.
Up with yah now Laddie, up, T is time we're on our way
We mustn't keep The Dear wait'n, yah see – this is your day.”
“ T isn't kind Sir, T isn't, yah fooled me all along
I knew T 'was all fishy, from the sound of your calling song;
I made it yah say, I did, I'll see The Dear Himself?”
“ Aye, T' is true, T' is true, your to get your bill of health.”
Well yah can imagine me delight, I was feeling ever so proud
Strolling up the road to Heaven in a fluffy white little cloud,
When lo'n behold there He was, to me His back a stand'n –
But that good friends is the story, of the passing of old Jack Shannon.

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