

Life's Like That, Isn't It?

Black 47

LIFE'S LIKE THAT, ISN'T IT?

The boy is holding his Mother's hand
In a seaside station
The streets are silent in the rain
Naked and dead in their small town pain
When the train pulls in, a man alights
Lugging a suitcase, battered but bright
With labels from the Argentines
He pulls down his hat, flexes his knees
Swaggers up the platform, Bogart on ice
Winks at the boy, kisses his wife
For a moment they're lost in their ardor
The boy is suddenly jealous of his Father.

The young couple walks hand in hand up the town
The boy just keeps his head down
Past the furniture store
Owned by a comrade from the Spanish Civil War
Looks in the window, to his surprise
An apparition in maple catches his eye
A Loyalist guitar from the Siege of Madrid
He presses his nose up to the windowsill
His Father says, "Como estas, Senor?"
The boy is entranced by your guitar
Here's a couple of quid down
You'll get the rest next Saturday
Life's like that, isn't it?•

Back in the house his parents disappear
To the bedroom they go, but all the boy can hear
Are the strings echoing off the maple,
His Father shouts out, "Hey son, soon you'll be able
To play me a tango, knock spots off the sound."
Then he grabs his wife, twirls her around.
The boy watches in wonder as the couple cavort
Outside the rain and thunder drown out
The chill of the devotional bell
While inside their small kitchen the father and mother

Are sublimely going to hell.

The boy is religious, serves mass at the Friary
Heâ€™s got a crush on St. Anthony
Got a hot date with him when he gets to heaven,
But itâ€™s still hard to get up at twenty to seven
On a gale force morning, slates hitting the streets
Exploding in smithereens all around him.
He runs in fear past the deserted garden where a man hung himself
His soul ever after sentenced to roam in search of salvation
But that morning his Father leaves from the station
Six months on the banana run down to West Africa
Itâ€™s up to him now heâ€™s got to look after
His tango-less, Bogarted broken-hearted Mother,
â€œLater for you, Dad, it was nice while it lasted but
Lifeâ€™s like that, isnâ€™t it?â€•

The boy plays guitar, reads voraciously
About sex and revolution in the County Library
And in bed he tunes in Radio Sofia
Gets it on with the sister comrade from Bulgaria
The librarian is worried she visits his Mother
â€œAll he wants is James Connolly and Patrice Lumumba.â€•
The Friars donâ€™t know what to do with this communist
â€œIf he donâ€™t look out heâ€™ll end up poor as St. Francis
Them auld books is drivinâ€™ the poor chap crazy,
Itâ€™s time he got a job, heâ€™s far too lazy,
Go out into the real world, meet a nice girl.â€•

He meets the girl but she is not so nice
She wears micro dresses has stormy black eyes
He no longer has time for the County Library
Learning about life in the back of a mini
Her dress is so soft but it's nothing compared to
Her silky white thighs, oh how heâ€™d like to
Go much further so they run off to Dublin
Heâ€™s drinking too much getting in trouble
With Maoâ€™s little red book, heâ€™s ready for action
But Black Eyes wants a house not Satisfaction
In Terenure, but heâ€™s heard Bernadette Devlin
So itâ€™s - take to the streets - Rock & Roll revolution!

Black Eyes is gone on the boat to London
And Connolly Youth is explodinâ€™
So he hops a plane to New York

Heâ€™s down on the Deuce hustling work
And recreation when she rings him,
In a Richmond accent, â€œmy only darling,
It would never work out, here is the reason:
Iâ€™ve fallen head over heels for an English policeman.â€•

So he plays the tango, remembers his Father
Resolves to live life like Bogart
Turn pain to music, sorrow to laughter
Live for today, to hell with tomorrow
It started at the station waiting for his Father,
One moment affects everything thereafter, but
Lifeâ€™s like that, isnâ€™t it?

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