

The Dutchman

John McDermott

The Dutchman's not the kind of man
To keep his thumb jammed in the dam
That holds his dreams in
But that's a secret only Margaret knows
When Amsterdam is golden in the morning
Margaret brings him breakfast
She believes him
He thinks the tulips bloom beneath the snows
He's mad as he can be
But Margaret only sees that sometimes
Sometimes, she sees her unborn children
In his eyes
Let us go to the banks of the ocean
Where the walls rise above the Zuiderzee
Long ago, I used to be a young man
And dear Margaret remembers for me
The Dutchman still wears wooden shoes
His cap and his coat are patched with love
That Margaret sewed in
Sometimes he thinks he's still in Rotterdam
He watches tug boats down canals
And calls out to them
When he thinks he knows the captain
'Til Margaret comes to take him home again
Through unforgiving streets
A tripping though she holds his arm
Sometimes he thinks that he's alone
And calls her name
Let us go to the banks of the ocean
Where the walls rise above the Zuiderzee
Long ago, I used to be a young man
And dear Margaret remembers for me
The windmills swirl the winter air
She winds his muffler tighter
They sit in the kitchen
And the tea with whiskey keep away the dew
He sees her for a moment, calls her name
She makes his bed up
Humming some old love song
She learned it when the tune was very new
He hums a line or two
They hum together in the night
The Dutchman falls asleep
And Margaret blows the candle out