

# The Night Before Larry Was Stretched

Elvis Costello

Oh, the night before Larry was stretched  
Well the boys they all paid him a visit  
A bit in their sacks too they fetched  
For they sweated their duds till they ris' it  
For Larry was always the lad  
When a boy was condemned to the Squeezer  
Would fence all the duds that he had  
For to help his poor friend to a sneezer  
And warm his ol' gob 'fore he died  
Well, the boys they came crowding in fast  
And they threw all their stools 'round about him  
Six glims round his trap case was placed  
For he couldn't be well waked without them  
When one of them asked, "Could he die  
Without having duly repented?"  
Said Larry, "That's all in me eye  
And first by the Clergy invented  
For to get a fat bit for themselves"  
"Oh, and I'll be cut up like a pie  
And me nob from me body be parted  
You're in the wrong box?, then, says I  
For blast me if they're so hardhearted  
"A chalk on the back of your neck  
Is all that Jack Catch dares to give you  
Then mind not such trifle's affect  
Oh, why should the likes of them grieve you?  
And now boys, come tip us the deck"  
Well, the cards being called for they played  
Until Larry found one of them cheated  
A point in his napper was made  
For the boy he'd been easily heated  
"Oh, hold me the hokey, you thief  
I'll scuttle your knob with me doodle  
You cheat me because I'm in grief  
Ah, but soon I'll demolish your noddle  
And leave you your claret to drink"  
Then the clergy came in with his book  
And he spoke him so smooth and so civil  
Larry tipped him kill sour look

And he pitched his big wig to the devil  
Then sighing he threw back his head  
For to get a sweet drop of the bottle  
And dutiful sighing he said  
"Oh, the hempt 'twill be soon 'round me throttle  
And choke me poor windpipe to death  
"Oh, then sure it's the best way to die  
Oh, the dead are no better the living  
For now when the gallows is high  
Our journey is shorter to Heaven"  
But what harasses Larry the most  
And makes his soul poor melancholy  
Is he thinks of the time when his ghost  
It will come in a sheet to Sweet Molly  
"Oh sure, it'll kill her alive"  
So moving, these last words he spoke  
We all vented our tears in a shower  
For me own part I thought me heart broke  
For to see him cut down like a flower  
On his travels we watched him next day  
The throttler I thought I could kill him  
But Larry not one word did say  
Nor change did he come to King William  
And then did his color grow white  
When he came to the old Dublin Chit  
He was tucked up so neat and so pretty  
The rumbler jugged off from his feet  
And he died with his face to the city  
He kicked too, but that was all pride  
For soon you might see 'twas all over  
Soon after the noose was untied  
In darkness we waked him in clover  
And sent him to take his ground sweat  
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