

In The Port of Amsterdam

By: Jacques Brel, Rod McKuen and John Denver

In the port of Amsterdam where the wild seagulls fly
there's a sailor who stills looking up to the sky
the arch of his neck and the thrust of his hip
are as strong and as proud as the prow of a ship

In the port of Amsterdam there's a sailor who sings
of the dreams that he brings from the wild open sea
and in the port of Amsterdam there's a sailor who sleeps
while the river bank weeps to the old willow tree

In the port of Amsterdam there's a sailor who dies
full of beer, full of cries, in a drunken down fight
and in the port of Amsterdam there's a sailor who's born
on a muggy gray morn' by the day's early light

In the port of Amsterdam there's a sailor whose face
is as wrinkled and cracked as a cobblestone street
and another whose face is as fair as a Christ's
who visits the sailors that rot in the deep.

In the port of Amsterdam where the sailors all meet
there's a sailor who eats only fish heads and tails
he will show you his teeth that have rotted too soon
that can haul up the sails, that can swallow the moon

And he yells to the cook with his arms open wide
"just bring me more fish, put it down by my side",
and he so wants to belch but he's too full to try
so he gets up and laughs and he zips up his fly.

In the port of Amsterdam there's a sailor who drinks
and he drinks and he drinks and he drinks once again
he drinks to the health of the whores of Amsterdam
who have promised their love to a thousand other men.

In the port of Amsterdam there's a one-legged man
who used to go sailing but no longer can
and his tales of the ocean grow wilder each year
as his guts sail along on his belly of beer

And he yells to the sailor who's sitting along:
"for a bottle of beer I'll follow you on
and we'll find us some women who taste like the sea
a blonde one for you and a black one for me"

In the port of Amsterdam there are sailors untold
who're twenty-six years and look withered and old
in the bellies of whores they've spilled out their youth
on the long run to nowhere in search of the truth

In the port of Amsterdam I stood in the dawn
as accordeons died and the daylight came on
I saw the blank faces of sailors go by
empty and void like the wide open sky

and I cried to the God wherever he'll be
who invites these young men to follow the sea
and the leaves them alone like a hollowed-out shell
condemned to burn up on a seashore in hell

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God damn Amsterdam!