The Exile's Return

I remember well that day when the Exile went away;
Left those he loved so dearly in foreign lands to stray.
I can see so plain the tears after all those weary years,
And the handshakes hear the blessings as he tore himself away.
It is thirty years and more since he left his native shore,
And so long between the letters, that it seemed as never more
To the old land he'd return, from that far away sojourn;
But the postman's brought a letter and he's coming back once more.
Since he crossed the western main in sunshine and in rain,
He has toiled for foreign masters a livelihood to gain;
He has mixed with many races saw many different faces,
But returning like the prodigal to the fatherland again.
And that thought, and expectation has begotten great elation,
As that homeward journey steers him back to the dear old nation;
His sundries now he's packing and his brain with thought is racking,
To surprise the simple Irish with his Yankeefied oration.

Now the mammoth liner's started from her moorings she has parted,
On board there's great commotion she is entering the ocean;
There are farewell bannerettes waving and the exile so light hearted.
And he's watching day by day as the liner ploughs her way
Through the ocean to that island she is nearing day by day,
Back again to dear old Ireland his own beloved sireland;
After all those weary years to repose in kindred clay.

On the deck he's standing peering, what is that he sees appearing?
As he gazes through the distance he cannot keep from cheering;
He sees the hills arisin' on the far away horizon,
And onboard the exclamations hurrah for dear old Erin.
Now that ocean journeys o'er and the liners near the shore,
She is entering the harbour that he left so long before;
Little more than a boy, went with sorrow back with joy,
To lay his bones in Erin now the wanderlust is o'er.

He is looking every way as he stands upon the quay;
No quondam friends to meet him no friendly voice to greet him;
Are the brothers, sisters, comrades all buried in the clay?
Now he can discern traces amongst that crowd of faces,
Of friends from whom he parted, so many years before;
I have seen that friendly meeting, I have heard that friendly greeting,
The exile now seems happy they have met to part no more.