

# THE VOYAGE OF THE HEROES

=====

(Tune: "Mick Maguire")

for Joe, Jack, and Frank

Come ladies all and gentlemen  
And hear a song from me  
About three Boston heroes  
And their voyage on the sea  
It's years now since it happened  
But the story's always new  
And even more important is  
Most every word is true!

The story starts with pretty girls  
(As many stories do)  
And the intentions of our stalwarts  
To bid them fond adieu  
To the ship all tied securely  
Came the lads to say goodbye  
And in the ladies' cabin  
Soon the fun began to fly

The accordions were playing away  
And the cheer was passing round  
And somehow in the ruckus  
No one seemed to hear the sound  
Of the ship's alarm bell ringing  
Or the whistle's mournful sigh  
The signal to all visitors  
That sailing time was nigh  
Instead the fun continued  
In the cabin deep below  
Until some reveler realized  
They were rocking to and fro  
"I think the ship is moving,"  
Said perceptive Joe to Jack  
"I wonder how far out we are?  
And how will we get back?"

The lads rushed to an upper deck  
Where quickly they did find  
They were on the ocean's bosom  
With old Boston far behind  
Officially they were stowaways  
And not much could they do  
But rejoin the ladies' cabin  
And start the fun anew

But soon the party ended  
And although their heads were sore  
They knew they had to hide themselves  
Till they reached old Erin's shore  
So they found an empty lifeboat  
And made it their new home  
As they steamed full speed to Ireland  
Across the silvery foam

But meanwhile back in Beantown  
There were cries of doubt and fear  
For Joey's car next day was found  
At the ship's departure pier  
When the police came to Joey's house  
Said his mom with visage grim  
"My darling plays the cordeen  
And he don't know how to swim..."  
But then someone else remembered  
That either Frank or Jack had said  
They'd be saying farewell to lady friends  
So they probably weren't dead  
A telegram to the Neptunia  
Soon revealed their woeful plight:  
The boys had been discovered  
In their boat the second night

No surprise - they're in the galley  
Peeling spuds and washing plates  
As officialdom in Ireland  
Decides upon their fates:  
They'd be taken off the ship at Cork  
And locked up for a while  
Till the next ship headed westbound  
Could return them home in style  
And that's just how it happened -  
Now the boys are in the clink  
But the Cork police are quite amused  
And sneak them the odd drink  
Next day by plane from Boston  
Comes an unhappy Mrs Joyce  
"Is that your son?" the sergeant asks.  
"It is," says an icy voice.

"And these others - would you vouch for them  
So we need hold them here no more?"  
"Now listen here," says Joey's mom  
"I've never seen those two before  
A couple of suspicious characters,

If you ask me, by their looks  
My Joey's friends aren't pirates  
Or ocean-going crooks..."

Then Frank and Jack in woeful plight  
Begin to plead in tears

"Ah Mrs Joyce - take another look -  
You've known us twenty years!"

But not a word does Mary hear  
(Though in fact she knows them well)  
And Joe is free while the other two  
Are returned to their lonely cell...

But Frank and Jack at last are freed  
And in fact allowed to stay  
When an uncle and a cousin  
Came to vouch for them next day  
But stony broke and desperate  
For a few pints and some grub  
They find themselves and their cordeens  
In a nearby friendly pub

They play a few tunes for the locals  
And decide to pass the hat  
And to their delight they leave the place  
With jingling pockets fat  
The local papers write them up  
And their story soon gets round  
The brave young Yankee stowaways  
Are now toasted through the town

Then they're off for further travelling  
Through mountain, plain, and pass  
Then for reasons never specified  
They decide to buy an ass  
It's snowy white and toothless  
Its bray is high and shrill  
"Two pounds - no less" says the seller  
(And that tinker is laughing still!)

And now the boys are riding  
On their newly-purchased beast  
Of its many noble qualities  
Swiftness has to be the least  
But it beats the hell out of walking  
And it seems to know its way  
(It's hard to get lost in Ireland  
When your speed is two miles a day)

And as they pass from town to town  
Their story soon has spread  
And it seems that all of Ireland

Has either heard or read  
Of our heroes' daring exploits  
On the sea and on the land  
Their money's no good for anything  
And life is generally grand  
    Until one night in Galway  
    With their thirst and hunger keen  
    They stop and tie White Lightning up  
    In front of a shebeen  
    Three most convivial hours  
    Disappear like mist on glass  
    But on emerging, our two heroes find  
    No trace of the faithful ass

They report the loss to the garda  
And an inquiry's soon begun  
And the search for old White Lightning  
Becomes a source of fun  
More pictures in the paper  
And more stories in the press  
But our heroes have grown weary  
And are homesick, more or less  
    So they bid farewell to Ireland  
    And are soon back on the sea  
    This time as paying passengers  
    Respectable, you see  
    And landed back in Boston  
    They are famous for a day  
    Until the Army calls them  
    And they have to go away

There's much more to the story  
I could put down in this song  
But a hundred twenty verses  
Might tend to be a little long  
In any case you know about  
Our heroes brave and bold  
God keep them safe and happy  
Till they're ninety-nine years old!

- B. Black  
April 2001