

CORK

by Kenneth Frawley

To find me on a Cork street is not surprising
For like whiskey down the pub,
Irish blood flows proudly through me
Suddenly three drunkards blast angrily out the public house
They point
They fume
They glow bright red
They shout
 '*Get your black ass off this island!*'
 '*Get your fucking black ass off this island!*'
I'm confused
A summer cloud has more hue in its pigment
I return their glare
Nothing
I turn round
Behind me, stands African man, dashiki *et al*
Like the drunkards, he too is proud
But that is not weapon enough against their promises of violence
Horrified, embarrassed, and ashamed
I quickly stand firm between drunkards and African
The fiends growl
Nervously, I remain firm
 '*You a darkie lover?*' growls one thug
 '*You a fuckin' darkie lover?*' exclaims another
 '*Piss off!*' I fire back
 '*He's a God damn fuckin' darkie lover!*' they bellow in unison
 '*Póg mo thóin!*' I rejoin, in the old Irish
I brace myself, poised, ready for the worst
The blackguards wobble from the drink
I stand relieved
Legless, they slip to the pavement
I turn round
The African nods
I nod
He moves on