

Black Canal

Am

They'll always find a place for you in the sidewalk cafes

No one ventures into the streets these days

Except strangers and those like me, looking for work

I noticed the smell when I got off the bus

And traced it down to a canal that ran

Right through the heart of the city

Like an open vein full of black rotten blood

A mirrored surface broken only by the bubbles of gas

Escaping from the stagnating mess that lay on the bottom

Fuelled by the chemicals and effluent of the city

Which was fed, in turn, by the barges and the ships

That followed that line and created the waves across that

Surface to the dockside where they unloaded their holds

The swarms of people clambering over them

I sat down in a cafe and I was holding my own

And minding my own business

And a voice spoke in my ears as if it recognised

That I was questioning the source of the smell

Have another beer boy, take it with a pinch of snuff

And my eyes were bedazzled, by the jewels in his silken cuff

And a voice rolled out from an ashen cloud from behind a long
cigar

Son, you'll never need to smell the black canal

It was as if he'd read my mind, as if he expected it

And, as the afternoon was wasted, I became aware I was becoming wrapped
up in his world

D

I became aware of the smell from the bouquet in his buttonhole

Am B
It was taking me away from the canal
Dm
And away from my questions

Am
I was aware that the perfumes were all around us
B Dm Am
And he sold me the city, well at least he tried to with all his stories

C/G D C/G D
All the silks out of China, and all the satins out of Spain
C/G D C/G D
All the powders for your noses will keep the stench at bay

F C D F C D F C D F C D F C D F C D F C D

C/G D C/G D
Have another beer boy, take it with a pinch of snuff
C/G D C/G D
Your eyes will be bedazzled, by the jewels in my scented cuff
C/G D C/G D
And a voice rolled out from an ashen cloud from behind a long cigar
C/G D C/G D
Son, you'll never need to smell this black canal

Am B Dm Am
And my world was spinnin', my head was awash with his promises and his beer
B Dm Am
And I looked up as he reached down and snorted the flower in his buttonhole
B Dm Am
He smiled and his eyes lied
B Dm Am
I was staring at a suit with no soul

B
No matter how you wash them, how you scrub and bleach and boil
Dm Am B
You'll never get rid of the smell of the black canal

Dm Am
Of the black canal
B Dm Am
Black canal, the black canal
B Dm Am
The black canal, the black canal
B Dm Am B Dm Am
The black canal