

The Ballad of Mucca McCourt

Jack McCourt – September 2020



Our dad was born, in the early morn, five miles from the Boston shore
On a small farmstead, in a Brighton bed, six years after the First World War
An Irish lad, half-good, half-bad, as a Mick from Boston was
He was good when he had to, but seemed always glad to, get in trouble just because.

He grew up not far, from an abattoir, where they scalded pigs each day
Sluggo his beast, would often feast, on the scraps that were thrown his way
The two were inseparable, no behavior irreparable, cause Sluggo was always there
To protect and to play, almost every day, in Boston weather foul or fair.

Raised to fear God, he was shocked and awed, each Sunday at morning mass
While the priest spoke Latin, in an obscure fashion, he was transfixed by the Church stained-glass
Though the priests were strict, the nuns would inflict, all the suffering and the pain
For lessons not learned, punishment was earned, knuckles rapped by a ruler again.

T'was the roaring twenties, with goods aplenty, but prohibition ruled the day
So, if you needed a drink, with two-bits and a wink, a speakeasy was not far away
Boston Mayor James Curley, politics hurly-burly, he befriended Irish blue-collar types
Although charged with corruption, a benign interruption, he governed in his prison stripes.

Mucca's dad Walter, would never falter, when providing for his family
There was Mary his wife, who lived a good life, and of the children, there were three
There were two sisters of course, that took care of their horse, before they could play and have fun
And the more difficult work, would never be shirked, by John the reliable son.

John Francis McCourt, preferred **Mucca** for short, would do anything for his friends
And if you needed a hand, or some help with your land, he would be there until the end
As a scholar not fated, his work unabated, Harvard was not his destiny
He had other designs, work that would not confine, him inside four walls endlessly.

Overcome by Depression, economic regression, the world upside-down in two-nine
What could anyone do, banking world all askew, world markets expedite the decline
Does anyone know where the love of God goes, when the bad news turns minutes to years
But the Greatest Generation, sacrificed for their nation, and persevered despite endless fears.

Later things went awry, on land and in sky, German troops stormed due east and due west
From the shores of Latakia, to Czechoslovakia, Hitler's troops sought out land they could wrest
But the Pearl Harbor attack, was what broke camel's back, **Mucca** chose Navy over Marine
Mucca promptly enlisted, though his parents resisted, since he was still only seventeen.

And off he would go, to Farragut, Idaho, south of Lake Pend Oreille
Where he'd train to fight, from dawn to twilight, before going into the fray
His naval specialty, was logistics you see, a purveyor of butter and bullets
And on occasion, just before an invasion, he'd provide sailors with beans, rice and pullets.

But when the fighting began, from Pearl to Saipan, each man put his life on the line
Both Sailor and Marine, they were brothers on-scene, lived and died on sandy shorelines
Mucca, a beachmaster, encountered certain disaster, on islands held by enemy
Beachmasters directed, and surely affected, success on both land and at sea.

In the South Pacific, with fighting horrific, each encounter could well be their last
It was extraordinary, these men most ordinary, praying to God during chapel mass
But morale was high, with boundless supplies, likely made by American women
They all had one goal, to survive the war whole, then return to their families again.

In late forty-two, Pacific Ocean so blue, in the “slot” near Guadalcanal
Mucca and shipmates, some with varying rates, prepared for the “not-so” banal
America’s fierce enemies, bushido-trained Japanese, were as savage as hostiles are found
The US had no intention, to avoid intervention, battling Tokyo Express in the Sound.

Next stop Bougainville, island-hopping uphill, as Marines overpower the Japs
Fighting hand-to-hand, over rugged land, avoiding well-placed enemy traps
At New Britain’s Rabaul, as **Mucca** recalled, vital port for US ship’s entree
It was **Saratoga’s** airpower, during those critical hours, keeping heavy Jap cruisers away.

John served the “duration”, required by his nation, released in forty-six
Now a civilian, no longer a hellion, he seeks help from the **King of the Micks**
To **Tip O’Neil**, he exclaims with such zeal, the need for an honest vocation
This young Brighton lad, now mostly good, seldom bad, seeks thanks from a grateful nation.

And **Tip** would always convene, at Brighton’s **Eight Ball** bar scene, to address the concerns of his
ward

Mick’s would all gather, ‘cause there’s no place they’d rather, do business for this beer-drinking
horde

Tip always so vocal, on **politics that are local**, then addressed **Mucca’s** future job needs
“I understand you like heights, and you are good in a fight, roofing work is secure, and it feeds.”

From that moment on, the pathway for John, was to work closer to God in the sky
From six-zero to six-four, he worked the fifty-two floors, on the Pru that was higher than high
With breathtaking views, Fenway Park to BU, Boston's skyline with towers now rife
He was part of that team, that crafted this dream, suffusing this steel structure with life.

Next task John Hancock, and it's just a few blocks, from the long shadows cast by the Pru
But the Hancock was taller, costing far greater dollars, and greater danger when the stiff winds blew
As evidenced on the ground, windowpanes all around, heavy glass falling from the blue sky
But with re-designing, blown-out windows re-pining, the "Plywood Palace" would look up and defy.

His showcase event, was the time that he spent, working the presidential library
For another Boston lad, also both good and both bad, and that was John F. Kennedy
At the dedication, with heartfelt congratulations, **Mucca** greeted Jack's brother Ted
Asking "How is the boy", **Mucca** not one to be coy, referring to Ted's son, instead.
Never one for "the fashion", his grey sweatshirts his passion, a warm pair of boots for the cold
Always a dawn riser, a construction supervisor, and each day an adventure be told
Of steel girders, crossbeams, stick welding the seams, as a living creation takes shape
And when it was over, he'd place a sprig of green clover, a "shamrock" at the skyscraper's nape.

A day now complete, his gaze then would greet, the sun setting low over the Charles
And well far below, to Boston's streets he would go, to do battle with the traffic snarls
And if it were summer, Southeast Expressway a bummer, en-route to the Duxbury shore
For a quick dip in the ocean, family time was the potion, then refresh and do it once more.

Our Dad was quiet yet tough, made from all the right stuff, that in a good father resides
He'd have his friend's back, if they were under attack, this man would always provide
He'd could be **strong like a bull**, knew when to push and not pull, he had common sense down cold
And all his five foot six, defined this tough Mick, with a heart and a soul made of gold.

Always by his side, was his lovely young bride, that he met while attending a wedding
Murphy's Law did not hold, it was Murphy's Luck we are told, for John was now heels-over-heading
Audrey and John, together were drawn, forever in a lifetime romance
And from their love's union, and constant communion, the McCourt shrub would slowly advance.

We choose today, to speak in a way, that honor's a much beloved man
A father and brother, a spouse to our mother, who challenged all things with "I can"
It is our utmost desire, to share the story entire, our love for the man we called Dad
So, future McCourt generations, understand our admiration, and the bountiful life that we've had.