Paddy on the Canal

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When I landed in sweet Philadelphia,
The weather was warm and was clear;
But I did not stay long in that city
As you shall quickly hear.
I did not stay long in that city
For it happened to be in the fall;
And I ne'er reefed a sail in my rigging
'Til I anchored upon the canal.

cho: So, fare you well father and mother,
Likewise to old Ireland too,
And fare you well sister and brother
For kindly I'll bid you adieu.

When I came to this wonderful empire,
It filled me with the greatest surprise.
To see such a great undertaking,
On the like I never opened my eyes.
To see a full thousand brave fellows,
At work among mountains so tall.
A dragging a chain through the mountains,
To strike a line for the canal, So....

I entered with them for a season,
My monthly pay for to draw.
And being of very good humor,
I often sang "Erin go bragh."
Our provision it was very plenty,
To complain we'd no reason at all.
I had money in every pocket,
While working upon the canal.

When at night we all rest from our labor,
Sure but our rent is all paid.
We laid down our pick and our shovel,
Likewise our axe and our spade.
We all set a joking together,
There was nothing our minds to enthrall.
If happiness be in this wide world,
I am sure it is on the canal.

From The Canaller's Songbook, Hullfish
Verses from The American Vocalist (1853); music from The Roving Irish Songster.

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