

Subway Singer

Winter 1972

I was born in a suburban town, had my own Capri
Used to drive it around on a Saturday night, slumming in NYC
But I got tired of Madras shorts and lobster Thermidor
I decided to meet the real people over here on the European shore

So I bought myself a pair of jeans, a Sears & Roebuck guitar
Cost me a whole week's allowance but I figured it would take me far
My mama cried when I said goodbye, I said I'd always be friends with her
Bought me a ticket out economy class, headed out for Ibiza

I wanna be a subway singer
I wanna be down and out
I wanna sleep in cold dark doorways
I wanna have a big hole in the bottom of my shoe

The first week down in them Spanish towns I made me a little cash
Made a dollar and a half in just one night and spent it all on hash
But those gypsy ladies laid eyes on me for messing up their skive
I caught the first thing smoking north out of there lucky to get out alive

The next stop north was old Panam, fifteen francs for a room
It made me feel mighty good again to be out on the streets on the bum
The holiday girls from Ioway cast sympathy coins my way
Little did they know I had just left behind a new powder blue Capri

I was doing pretty well around Saint Michel, the cops weren't bothering me at all
Eating steak frites every Saturday night down at Le Serail
But those gypsy ladies got down on me, made me feel like an evictor
So I packed my gear and headed over here, put myself in the London picture

I wasn't here but a week or two when a man in a big-brimmed hat
Came up to me in Piccadilly C, said would you like some money for that?
I took his pen and I signed the line, I'm making fifteen pence a round
But he says when the European rights come through he's gonna up my take to a pound

I hope this fame it don't bother me, I hope it don't make me cocksure
It's all very nice to have your sugar and spice but I'd rather be noble and pure
So when those dolly birds thrown money at me I'll turn the other cheek
Give it all to the first gypsy I see and go back rambling under the street

The ironic imagined journey of an expat busking through Europe. I went to most of the places named in the song but did no street-singing. "Panam" is an old name for Paris.