

Queen Merka & Me

Janis Ian

Oh, the pretty little girl, on Easter's day
by a bright center fountain consented to play
Held an Easter star very close to her heart
Stepping back from the fountain
so as not to be harmed by the spray
There she did play
Told her toy rabbit to smile, for a poor man's child
can also be loved by the rain from above
Glistening spray
And the soldiers on leave from the ship Genevieve
with their all-shining buttons and newly-pressed sleeves
Taking pictures that day of the Easter Parade
they stood watching the clowns
who were gathered about pretty girls
Now watching them swirl,
told one another to laugh mainly to forget
all the memories of dead swirling leaves
seen from the ship Genevieve
Nobody sees but Queen Merka and me
and she is sitting beneath a tree
86th Street, 11 pm in the evening tide
And the little girl hippie, the queen of virginity,
says for her lover she has an affinity
Her hair swings with ease, he trips in the breeze,
She comes to the fountain and says,
If you'd please move around,
I should like to sit down
Painting her mind with a flask, readjusting her mask
She's a virgin queen who's done everything
and a bit more
And the great stoned hash eater, the childless wife beater
He walks with his boyfriend on into the spray
Saying "I love you babe,"
Walking down toward the pavement
and locking, embracing, as though to say
"I don't care; I love him more than her."
He makes his way down to the center of town
where a fountain of petals says "You are not metal"
"Your love is not wrong"
Nobody sees but Queen Merka and me
And she is sitting beneath a tree
86th Street, 11 pm in the evening tide
And the dirty old man, he whiles out the day
He's a permanent fixture, a sidewalk display
He's got very strange habits, like making passes
and he smiles with his dentures
as the fountain spray passes his crown
It's all part of the merry-go-round
Thinks of them that's behind, sort of wishing that life
could be a bit more fair, as he's losing his hair
There goes his sex appeal
And what of the fountain? Oh, it overflows
drowning all the people in their best Easter clothes
Laughingly, knowingly, it's unifying
all of the people, assured they were dying
tethered, bound by water together
The city's together at last, but the moment has passed

They all walk away, far from the spray
Going their separate ways
Nobody sees but Queen Merka and me
And she is sitting beneath a tree
86th Street, 11 pm in the evening tide