

# Searching for America

Janis Ian

Where have you been that made you weep  
And left these stains upon your cheek  
What did you see while you were gone  
That haunts your eyes this sunny dawn

They herded us like so much meat  
Up from the sewers to the street  
Where concrete canyons stretched their walls  
So high it made us want to crawl  
Past proverbs writ on subway cars  
And in-between the window bars  
We walked until the pavement bled  
And not a curse was left unsaid

Into a place that knows no spring  
Where only steel and silver sing  
They made us dance until we dropped  
And the music of the jackhammers stopped

I caught a cinder in my eye  
Searching for a patch of sky  
But the shadows drizzled down like in Pompeii  
That's how I spent my yesterday

Searching for America  
In the rivets and the rust  
Searching for America  
Finding only dust

What did you see that made you cry  
And left these trackmarks on your eye  
What did you find while you were there  
That sucks the light out of the morning air

They gave us each a cropper's shack  
And land so hard it broke our back  
Then fed us 'til our bellies burst  
On promises that died at birth  
So I lay the baby out each dawn  
In-between the tender corn  
With sunrise for her bonnet  
And flies her only blanket

We harvested until we bled  
'Til every single root ran red  
And when the work was finally done  
They gave our names to immigration  
I did not know how bad it hurt  
Until I lay there eating dirt  
And the cold seeped in between my bones  
That's where I was when I left home

Searching for America  
All her dreams and hopes  
Searching for America  
Finding only ghosts

Who are these people you have seen  
To dream this dark and distant dream  
To tell the stories you have told  
To leave these bruises on your soul

They are the flesh, they are the bone  
They are the very cornerstone  
They leave their mansions and their shacks  
To hide here in-between the cracks  
Their hope is tattooed on my lips  
Bleeding from my fingertips  
They are crawling toward the promised land  
Hand over hand

To walk until they run no more  
And wash up on some distant shore  
Where truth is not the enemy  
And whatever does not kill us, sets us free

Somewhere out there  
Are millions just like me  
Homesick for Eden  
Heartsick at the memory

Searching for America  
In every stick and stone  
Searching for America  
Going home  
Searching for America  
Going home