

Sniper

Harry Chapin

She said not now, she said not now
She said not now, she said not now

It is an early Monday morning
The sun is becoming bright on the land
No one is watching as he comes a walking
Two bulky suitcases hang from his hands

He heads towards the tower that stands in the campus
He goes through the door, he starts up the stairs
The sound of his footsteps, the sound of his breathing
The sound of the silence when no one was there

I didn't really know him
He was kind of strange
Always sort of sat there
He never seemed to change

He reached the catwalk, he put down his burden
The four sided clock began to chime
7 a.m., the day is beginning
So much to do and so little time

He looks at the city where no one had known him
He looks at the sky where no one looks down
He looks at his life and what it has shown him
He looks for his shadow, it cannot be found

He was such a moody child
Very hard to touch
Even as a baby he never smiled too much
No, no, no, no

You bug me, she said
Your ugly, she said
Please hug me, I said
But she just sat there

With the same flat stare
That she saves for me alone
When I'm home, when I'm home
Take me home

He laid out the rifles, he loaded the shotgun
He stacked up the cartridges along the wall
He knew he would need them for his conversation
If it went as it he planned, then he might use them all

He said, "Listen you people I've got a question
You won't pay attention but I'll ask anyhow
I found a way that will get me an answer
Been waiting to ask you 'till now, right now"

Am I? I am a lover whose never been kissed
Am I? I am a fighter whose not made a fist
Am I? If I'm alive then there's so much I've missed
How do I know I exist?

Are you listening to me?
Are you listening to me?
Am I?

The first words he spoke took the town by surprise
One got Mrs. Gibbons above her right eye
It blew her through the window, wedged her against the door
Reality poured from her face, staining the floor

He was kind of creepy, sort of a dunce
I met him at the corner bar
I only dated the poor boy once
That's all, just once, that was all

Bill Whedon was questioned as he stepped from his car
Tom Scott ran across the street but he never got that far
The police were there in minutes, they set up barricades
He spoke right on over them in a half-mile circle
In a dumb struck city his pointed questions were sprayed

He knocked over Danny Tyson as he ran towards the noise
Just about then the answers started coming, sweet, sweet joy
Thudding in the clock face, whining off the walls
Reaching up to where he sat there, answering calls

Thirty-seven people got his message so far
Yes, he was reaching them right where they are

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They set up an assault team, they asked for volunteers
They had to go and get him, that much was clear
And the word spread about him on the radios and TV's
In appropriately sober tones they asked, "Who can it be?"

He was a very dull boy, very taciturn
Not much of a joiner
He did not want to learn
No, no, no, no

They're coming to get me, they don't want to let me
Stay in the bright light too long
It's getting on noon now, it's goin' to be soon now
But oh, what a wonderful sound

Mama, won't you nurse me?
Rain me down the sweet milk of your kindness
Mama, it's getting worse for me
Won't you please make me warm and mindless?

Mama, yes, you have cursed me
I never will forgive you
For your blindness
I hate you

The wires are all humming for me
And I can hear them coming for me
Soon they'll be here but there's nothing to fear
Not any more though they've blasted the door

She said not now, she said not now

As the copter dropped the gas he shouted, " Who cares ?"
They could hear him laughing as they started up the stairs
They stormed out on the catwalk, blinking at the sun
With their final fusillade his answer had come

Am I? There is no way that you can hide me
Am I? Though you have put your fire inside me
Am I? You've given me my answer, can't you see?
I was, I am and now I will be, I will be