

Retrospective

Tom Paxton

Now, when the paint was dry
And the colours set
It was painful yet
To an honest eye
Here, where the walls were hung
With the sweat of years
The familiar fears
Since the hands were young
Now, in a battered chair
With his tea gone cold
And his hands grown old
He will sit and stare
Here, where his life is hung
With the blood in view
There's been nothing new
Since the hands were young
Schoolboys laugh in the streets below
Laughter cruel as the long ago
Fingers point through the bitter years
And the bitter tears
Now, when the paint was dry
And the die was cast
It was clear at last
It was all a lie
Red never left his hand
And the blue was wrong
With a green too strong
Never what he planned
Now, in a rumpled bed
With a night to kill
He'll be painting still
If he isn't dead
Now, he can only stare
As the old dream falls
At the mocking walls
And the walls are bare