

Tamburitza Lingua

Ani DiFranco

A cold and porcelain lonely
In an old New York hotel
A stranger to a city
That she used to know so well
Bathing in a bathroom
That is bathed in the first blue light
Of the beginning of a century
At the end of an endless night

Then she is wet behind the ears and wafting down the avenue
Pre-rush hour
Post-rain shower
Stillness seeping upwards like steam
From another molten sewer
Summer in New York

They've been spraying us with chemicals in our sleep
Us / they
Something about the mosquitoes having some kind of disease
Them / me
CIA foul play
If you ask the guy selling hair dryers out of a gym bag
Chemical warfare
"I'm telling you, lab rat to lab rat," he says, "that's where the truth is at"
That's where the truth is at
That's where the truth is at

And everything seems to have gone terribly wrong that can
But one breath at a time is an acceptable plan
She tells herself
And the air is still there
And this morning it's even breathable
And for a second the relief is unbelievable
And she's a heavy sack of flour sifted
Her burden lifted
She's full of clean wind for one lean moment
And then she's trapped again
Reverted
Caged and contorted
With no way to get free
And she's getting plenty of little kisses
But nobody's slippin' her the key

Her whole life is a long list of what ifs
And she doesn't even know where to begin
And the pageantry of suffering therein
Rivals television
TV is, after all, the modern day roman coliseum
Human devastation as mass entertainment
And now millions sit jeering
Collectively cheering
The bloodthirsty hierarchy of the patriarchal arrangement

She is hailing a cab
She is sailing down the avenue
She's 19 going on 30

Or maybe she's really 30 now ...
It's hard to say
It's hard to keep up with time once it's on its way

And, you know, she never had much of a chance
Born into a family built like an avalanche
And somewhere in the 80s between the oat bran and the ozone
She started to figure out things like why
One eye pointed upwards looking for the holes in the sky
One eye on the little flashing red light
A picasso face twisted and listing down the canvas
Of the end of an endless night

10 9 8 seven six 5 4 three 2 one
And kerplooeey
You're done.
You're done for.
You're done for good.
So tell me
Did you?
Did you do
Did you do all you could?