

# The Dozens

Caroline Herring

I had a few more questions  
I never knew to ask  
You were feeling downhearted  
The last time we parted  
With a shock of white hair  
Life has changed a lot you know  
And I'm kind of scared of that  
It bottoms out in seconds flat

You said you had a good friend  
He died so needlessly  
Knocked over by a garbage truck  
They threw him down  
Then they picked him up  
And your son was back home again  
Your little boy and his children  
He's fighting off a mean disease  
That's killing off his faculties

Tell me a little joke  
Let's play the dozens  
Say something about my mama  
In a veiled quadrille round  
I'm just a white girl from a segregated town  
And I'm looking for some answers  
That I haven't found

I remember Memphis  
Like it was yesterday  
And a Ford station wagon  
So full of us it was dragging  
With your books in our grasping hands  
We heard you speak  
We made our plans  
To hoist the flag and rule the world  
All the hopes we had unfurled

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I want to be just like you  
I want to love first, I do  
Look people in the eye  
Make them feel good  
Then I'll make them think  
Just like you would

Y'all were off on a night stroll  
Down the capitol boulevards  
You were emboldening another son  
Of this grand nation  
I would vote for you for president

But you're floating with the butterflies  
Soaring with the seagulls  
Or the eagle as he takes the skies

Let's eat some democratic soup  
And Eastern Market cheese  
Meals with you and Cornelia  
Were my most precious memories  
I don't know what the hell to do  
Please give me a little tap  
Tell me I can take it  
That I won't bottom out in seconds flat