

One Dance

Dan Bern

They say you taught me how to talk
Bet you wish you taught me how to stop
You're far away now, wish I could take a walk with you someplace
You explained me to our parents
English wasn't their first language
They spoke German, hated Germans
Confusing times
Oh sister
Down midwest backseat bumpy seats
You sang my beatles songs with me
I sang your Broadway melodies, bad harmony
And where would Willie Mays have been
Without Jackie Robinson
And who can say what I'd been
Without you to lead the way
After I showed some guys I could drink
You picked me of the lawn I think
And led me to the kitchen sink
Where I got rid of it
Some nights I lay awake in awe
As squinting through the dark I saw
You peeling off your teenage bra
The door slightly ajar
Oh sister
You lived just across the hall
For 18 summers, 18 falls
Until you went away to that weird college in Wisconsin
And where would Willie Mays have been
Without Jackie Robinson
And who can say what I'd been
Without you to lead the way
Trust yourself, and you can do anything
This I give to you
May your heart purr like a bumblebee
May all your backyards have a tree
May you always be HIV negative
I hope you meet some guy who
Treats women better than I do
I don't even care if he's a Jew or not
Oh sister
I remember in the temple hall
At out dear father's funeral you sang like a nightingale
One of his own songs
And where would Willie Mays have been
Without Jackie Robinson
And who can say what I'd been
Without you to lead the way