

# Bedlam

Elvis Costello

I've got this phosphorescent portrait of gentle Jesus meek and mild  
I've got this harlot that I'm stuck with carrying another man's child  
The solitary star announcing vacancy burnt out as we arrived  
They'd throw us back across the border if they knew that we survived  
And they were surprised to see us  
So they greeted us with palms  
They asked for ammunition, acts of contrition and small alms

I might recite a small prayer  
If I ever said them  
I lay down on an iron frame  
Found myself in bedlam  
I wish that I could take something for drowning out the noise  
Wailing echoes down the corridors

I've got this imaginary radio, and I'm punching up the dial  
I've got the A.C. trained on the T.V. so it won't blow up in my eye  
And everything that I thought fanciful and mocked as too extreme  
Must be family entertainment here in the strange land of my dreams  
Now I'm practicing my likeness of St. Francis of Assisi  
For if I hold my hand outstretched  
A little bird comes to me

I might recite a small prayer  
If I ever said them  
I lay down on an iron frame  
Found myself in bedlam  
Escaping from the fingers that were stretching through the bars  
Wailing echoes down the corridors

The player piano picks out "Life Goes On"  
Ring tone rang out "Jerusalem"  
And in this pit of sadness  
Where the rank of wretched plunge  
We've buried all the innocents  
Now we must bury revenge

They've got this scared and decorated girl strapped to the steel trunk of a  
mustang  
And then they drove her down a cypress grove where traitors hang and stars s  
till spangle  
They dangled flags and other rags along a coloured thread of twine  
And then they dragged that bruised and purple heart along the road to Palest  
ine

Someone went off muttering, he mentioned thirty pieces  
Easter saw a slaughtering, each wrapped in bloodstained fleeces

Then my thoughts returned to vengeance, but I put up no resistance  
Though I seemed a long way from my home  
It really was no distance

And I might recite a small prayer  
If I ever said them  
I lay down on an iron frame  
Found myself in bedlam  
Bowling like an actor acknowledging applause

Playing the Crusader who was conquering the Moors  
And he knew the consequences, but he won't accept the cause  
Wailing echoes down the corridors