

## My Back Pages

Eric Johnson

Crimson flames tied through my ears  
Rollin' high and mighty traps  
Pounced with fire on flaming roads  
Using ideas as my maps  
"We'll meet on edges, soon," said I  
Proud 'neath heated brow.  
Ah, but I was so much older then,  
I'm younger than that now.

Half-wracked prejudice leaped forth  
"Rip down all hate", I screamed  
Lies that life is black and white  
Spoke from my skull. I dreamed  
Romantic facts of musketeers  
Foundationed deep, somehow.  
Ah, but I was so much older then,  
I'm younger than that now.

Girls' faces formed the forward path  
From phony jealousy  
To memorizing politics  
Of ancient history  
Flung down by corpse evangelists  
Unthought of, though, somehow.  
Ah, but I was so much older then,  
I'm younger than that now.

A self-ordained professor's tongue  
Too serious to fool  
Spouted out that liberty  
Is just equality in school  
"Equality," I spoke the word  
As if a wedding vow.  
Ah, but I was so much older then,  
I'm younger than that now.

In a soldier's stance, I aimed my hand  
At the mongrel dogs who teach  
Fearing not that I'd become my enemy  
In the instant that I preach  
My pathway led by confusion boats  
Mutiny from stern to bow.  
Ah, but I was so much older then,  
I'm younger than that now.

Yes, my guard stood hard when abstract threats  
Too noble to neglect  
Deceived me into thinking  
I had something to protect  
Good and bad, I define these terms  
Quite clear, no doubt, somehow.  
Ah, but I was so much older then,  
I'm younger than that now.