

I Miss America

Harry Chapin

By the time I was thirteen I started takin' shape
At eighteen I was so beautiful that the strangers started to gape
They told me enter the ultimate contest
If you're as gorgeous as you seem
They said, "Please, please, please be our American dream"

But late that night beneath the grievin' moon
There's a dazzling sight in my motel room
For a grunting judge with his bulging eyes
I give my all for his cherished prize

Oh why, oh why?
I, I Miss America crying on TV
Silver clad in satin rags
But everything's where it should be
Oh say, can you see? Oh say, can you see?

After they showed me the game ball they told me put on weight
They told me I'd be so powerful, then they told me I would be great
They told me Uncle Sam he would coach you, his helmet on your head
And they said, "Please, please, please, please
Please win and beat the spread"

But the new game plan that the owners had made
Meant that win or lose there would be a little trade
For the team's become a real gold mine
And the kid's sold off for the bottom line

Oh why, oh why?
Mr. America sweating on TV
The winner's joy from the battered boy
For everything's where it should be
Oh say can, you see? Oh say, can you see?

At last we've come together, call it marriage or civil war
If it brings us to battle, babe, it must be worth our fighting for
Though today came up cloudy, there will be other days
Oh, please, please, please, please
What else is there to say?

But in plywood spread, by a plastic stream
And in separate beds with a borrowed dream
And with questions wide, the silence deep
We take two pills so at last we'll sleep

Oh why, oh why?
Mr. and Mrs. America, our story's on TV
Can you hear canned laughter?
For everything's where it should be
Oh say, can you see? Oh say, can you see?

My little boy he told me something just the other night.
He whispered it as I kissed him before I turned out the light
And of course he said it simple as only children can
He said, "Daddy, daddy, daddy, please
I'm ready to dream again"