

# Lawless Avenues

Jackson Browne

Papa hit him, Mama kissed him  
Made him go to Catechism  
With the sisters in their black and white  
And all the time those city streets  
Were teaching him another kind of wisdom  
When to run and when to fight  
Up at the playground after school  
Listening to tales of the prison system  
And those lawless avenues

Dawn on a half darkened street  
A child's footsteps repeat  
And something there turns them  
Down those lawless avenues

Silent Joe went down so bad  
He was the strongest fighter the avenues had  
Stabbed in the chest he went down swinging  
Someone from some other part of town  
No one even seen it coming down  
And you don't hear no church bells ringing  
And in the violent night the police light  
Sweeps across the lots and the yards  
Following those lawless avenues

Down on a half darkened street  
Armies advance and retreat  
And struggle to take control  
From those lawless avenues

Manuelito's sister Rosa  
Ran away with a surfer from Hermosa  
Manuelito, cuida a Rosa,  
Hay mira como estan las cosas!  
(Manuelito take care of Rosa  
...Look at how things are)

But who could blame her after she saw  
Every boy die who could have gotten close to her  
Rosa es joven u solo quiere  
ver la belleza del mundo  
(Rosa is young and only wants  
To see the beauty of the world)

Manuel said:  
"You gotta fight for what you want in this life"  
Just before they shipped him overseas to 'Nam  
Otra guerra sin razon  
Otra guerra sin fin, sin honor  
(Another war without reason,  
Another war without end, without honor)

And she was fighting to understand  
When they shipped Manuelito's body home  
All she heard was one more shot  
Echoing down lawless avenues

Hoy amigo, tal igual como ayer,  
La lucha en el barrio no cambia  
Nuestros hijos son los que han de crecer  
Por ley de la calle, viviendo entre abrazos  
Y chingazos  
(Today my friend, just like yesterday,  
The struggle in the barrio doesn't change.  
Our children are the ones to grow up  
By the law of the street  
Living between hugs and blows)

Down on a half darkened street  
Fathers' and sons' lives repeat  
And something there turns them  
Down those lawless avenues

En el calor de la calle  
(In the heat of the street)  
Buscan valor en la calle  
(Looking for valor in the street)  
Hasta final de la calle  
(Till the end of the street)