

Lights Of Cheyenne

James McMurtry

Look off down the highway
at the glittering lights
Like windshield glass
on the shoulder tonight
As the diesels come
grinding on up from the plains
All bunched up like pearls on a string
And I guess time don't mean nothin'
Not nothin' at all
And out on the horizon
the broken stars fall
Old broken stars they
fall down on the land
And get mixed together
with the lights of Cheyenne

Well I've been up all night
and I'm down on my back
Workin' the counter
to take up the slack
'Cause the money tree's light
and the whiskey stream's low
You ain't worked a week
since July

You say the gravel pit's hiring
After the first
But you don't have the
nature for that kind of work
You might get hired on
But you won't make a hand
And I'll still be here lookin'
at the lights of Cheyenne

You stand in the sky
with your feet on the ground
Never suspectin' a thing
But if the sky were to
move you might never be found
Never be heard from again

We go on good behavior when
our youngest comes home
She comes up from Boulder
but she never stays long
And that oldest still fights
me like she was 18
Stopped in for a 6-pack awhile ago

And she's got a cowboy problem
And this last one's a sight
All dressed up like Gunsmoke
for Saturday night
And they were off to the bars
for lack of a plan
Racing the stars to the lights of Cheyenne

And you've kept all that
meanness inside you so long
You'd fight with a fence post
if it looked at your wrong
Well the post won't hit back,
and it won't call the law
I look at your right,
or I don't look at all

Now take a crumpled up
soft pack and give it a shake
Out by the dumpster on a cigarette break
With one eye swelled up from
the back of your hand
And the other eye fixed
on the lights of Cheyenne

You stand in the sky with
your feet on the ground
Never suspectin' a thing
But if the sky were to
move you might never be found
Never be heard from again

Now there's antelope grazing
in range of my gun
Come opening weekend
you won't see a one
They'll vanish like ghosts
'cause somehow they know
But now they're up to the
fence in the early dawn

And it's warming up nicely
for this time of year
The creeks are still frozen but
the roads are all clear
And I don't have it in me
to make one more stand
Though I never much cared f
or the lights of Cheyenne