

## Queen Merka & Me

Janis Ian

Oh, the pretty little girl, on Easter's day  
by a bright center fountain consented to play  
Held an Easter star very close to her heart  
Stepping back from the fountain  
so as not to be harmed by the spray  
There she did play  
Told her toy rabbit to smile, for a poor man's child  
can also be loved by the rain from above  
Glistening spray  
And the soldiers on leave from the ship Genevieve  
with their all-shining buttons and newly-pressed sleeves  
Taking pictures that day of the Easter Parade  
they stood watching the clowns  
who were gathered about pretty girls  
Now watching them swirl,  
told one another to laugh mainly to forget  
all the memories of dead swirling leaves  
seen from the ship Genevieve  
Nobody sees but Queen Merka and me  
and she is sitting beneath a tree  
86th Street, 11 pm in the evening tide  
And the little girl hippie, the queen of virginity,  
says for her lover she has an affinity  
Her hair swings with ease, he trips in the breeze,  
She comes to the fountain and says,  
If you'd please move around,  
I should like to sit down  
Painting her mind with a flask, readjusting her mask  
She's a virgin queen who's done everything  
and a bit more  
And the great stoned hash eater, the childless wife beater  
He walks with his boyfriend on into the spray  
Saying "I love you babe,"  
Walking down toward the pavement  
and locking, embracing, as though to say  
"I don't care; I love him more than her."  
He makes his way down to the center of town  
where a fountain of petals says "You are not metal"  
"Your love is not wrong"  
Nobody sees but Queen Merka and me  
And she is sitting beneath a tree  
86th Street, 11 pm in the evening tide  
And the dirty old man, he whiles out the day  
He's a permanent fixture, a sidewalk display  
He's got very strange habits, like making passes  
and he smiles with his dentures  
as the fountain spray passes his crown  
It's all part of the merry-go-round  
Thinks of them that's behind, sort of wishing that life  
could be a bit more fair, as he's losing his hair  
There goes his sex appeal  
And what of the fountain? Oh, it overflows  
drowning all the people in their best Easter clothes  
Laughingly, knowingly, it's unifying  
all of the people, assured they were dying  
tethered, bound by water together  
The city's together at last, but the moment has passed

They all walk away, far from the spray  
Going their separate ways  
Nobody sees but Queen Merka and me  
And she is sitting beneath a tree  
86th Street, 11 pm in the evening tide