

**4 June 1989**

**Mary Chapin Carpenter**

I told them we heard singing first before we reached the Square  
"Arise the wretched of the earth" filled the air  
So many fists clenched to the sky we couldn't count them all  
But then the sea of weeping washed over the Hall

I told them no one saw me, there was no one who would know  
I was an army soldier dressed in students clothes  
Between the smoking bonfires we held our rifles high  
As the ashes of the banners soared into the sky

Ah, I was seventeen that spring  
Ah, we were just obeying orders  
Ah, I still see everything  
Through the factory's yellow windows  
In the dirty stinking river  
In the messages that find you then vanish in the ether  
They vanish in the ether:

I told them not to fear me but history tells the tale  
The artists and the poets fill up every jail  
Before I held a rifle I held an artist's brush  
Before Tiananmen I even dreamed of love

Ah, I was seventeen that spring  
Ah, we were just obeying orders  
Ah, I still see everything  
Through the factory's yellow windows  
In the dirty stinking river  
In the messages that found me, then vanished in the ether  
In the messages that found me:.

I told them they'd see me walking in the rain  
In Budapest, in Prague, in Soweto's lanes  
Between the burning oil drums and the graffiti on the wall  
I told them, yes I told them, I told them all

Ah, I was seventeen that spring  
Ah, we were just obeying orders  
Ah, and I still see everything  
Through the factory's yellow windows  
In the dirty stinking river  
In the messages that find us, then vanish in the ether  
Oh the messages will find us, then vanish in the ether