

How Can You Live in the Northeast?

Paul Simon

We heard the fireworks
Rushed out to watch the sky,
Happy go lucky, 4th of July

How can you live in the Northeast?
How can you live in the South?
How can you live on the banks of a river
When the floodwater pours from the mouth?

How can you be a Christian?
How can you be a Jew?
How can you be a Muslim, a Buddhist, a Hindu?
How can you?

Weak as the winter sun, we enter life on earth.
Names and religion comes just after date of birth.
And everybody gets a tongue to speak,
And everyone hears an inner voice,
A day at the end of the week to wonder and rejoice.

If the answer is infinite light, why do we sleep in the dark?

How can you live in the Northeast?
How can you live in the South?
How can you live on the banks of a river?
When the floodwater pours from the mouth?

How can you tap your body?
Why do you cover your hand?
How can you eat from a rice bowl
When the holy man breaks bread?

We watched the fireworks till they were fireflies.
Followed a path of stars over the endless skies.

How can you live in the Northeast?
How can you live in the South?
How can you build on the banks of a river
When the floodwater pours from the mouth, from the mouth?

I've been given all I wanted,
All the three generations of the book.
I've harvested and I've planted.
I'm wearing my father's old coat.