

Tombstone Blues

Richie Havens

The sweet pretty things are in bed now, of course
The city fathers they're trying to endorse
The reincarnation of Paul Revere's horse
But the town has no need to be nervous

The ghost of Belle Starr, she hands down her wits
To Jezebel, the nun, she violently knits
A bald wig for Jack, the ripper, who sits
At the head of the chamber of commerce

Mama's in the factory, she ain't got no shoes
Daddy's in the alley, he's lookin' for food
And I'm in the kitchen with the tombstone blues

The hysterical bride in the penny arcade
Screaming she moans, "I've just been made"
Then sends out for the doctor who pulls down the shade
And says, "My advice is to not let the boys in"

Now, the medicine man comes and he shuffles inside
He walks with a swagger and he says to the bride
"Stop all that weeping and swallow your pride
You will not die, it's not poison"

Well John, the Baptist, after torturing a thief
Looks up at his hero, the Commander-in-Chief
Saying, "Tell me great hero but please make it brief
Is there a hole for me to get sick in?"

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The Commander-in-Chief answers him while chasing a fly
Saying, "Death to all those who would whimper and cry"
And dropping a bar bell, he points to the sky
Saying, "The sun's not yellow, it's chicken"

The king of the Philistines, his soldiers to save
Put jawbones on their tombstones and flatters their graves
Put the pied pipers in prison and fattens the slaves
Then sends them out to the jungle

Gypsy Davey with a blowtorch, he burns out their camps
With his faithful slave Pedro behind him, he tramps
With a fantastic collection of stamps
To win friends and influence his uncle

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The geometry of innocence, flesh on the bone
Causes Galileo's math book to get thrown
At Delilah, who's sits worthlessly alone
But the tears on her cheeks are from laughter

Now, I wish I could give Brother Bill his great thrill
I would set him in chains at the top of the hill
Then send out for some pillars and Cecil B. DeMille
He could die happily ever after

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Where Ma Raney and Beethoven once unwrapped their bed roll
Tuba players will now rehearse around the flagpole
And the National Bank for a profit, sells road maps for the soul
To the old folks, home and the college

Now, I wish I could write you a melody so plain
That could hold you dear lady from going insane
That could ease you and cool you and cease the pain
Of your useless and pointless knowledge

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And I'm in the kitchen with the tombstone blues

Got the tombstone blues
Tombstone blues