

Don't Be Surprised

Tim O'Brien

She was heavy with child, he had a hungry look
They were out on the road just waitin' to be took
And I wasn't much better, all I owned in a sack
But I had enough street smarts to watch my back
And he asked me if I knew a place they could go
To keep from the wind, away from the rain and the drivin' snow
He said I'm good with my hands, I can work my way
But I don't know a soul hear, there's not much I can pay
I just shook my head and all I could say was
Don't be surprised when they turn you away

I said your child will be born to a heartless place
If he tries to do good, they'll just spit in his face
He might heal the sick, make a lame man walk
Draw big crowds of people to hear his talk
But he'd make rich men nervous, they'd take him away
Put him on trial, and twist his words just to make make him pay

He might be humble, the gentlest around
But that won't stop some men from puttin' him down
You see I don't have much faith in people these days
So don't be surprised if they turn him away

I guess someday maybe Rome will fall
Peace could live inside Jerusalem's walls
Men will succeed at lots of things they try
Grow food in the desert, even learn how to fly
In two thousand years they'll look back on our day
And study about us, wonder how in the world we could live this way
But the more things change the more they stay the same
Men will never give up their hurtful games
A few will stand tall, a few will walk straight
But most of us will fall to the fear and hate

I guess at the time it didn't seem so odd
But that was Joseph and Mary, the mother of God
I wouldn't change a word if I saw them today
And I wouldn't be surprised if they turned them away
He said I'm good with my hands, I can work my way
But I don't know a soul hear, there's not much I can pay
I just shook my head and all I could say was
Don't be surprised when they turn you away