

A Rumblin' in the Land

Tom Paxton

I can hear the rumblin' river as it rushes underground
I can hear the breakers crashing; I can hear the breakers pound
I can stand beneath the waterfall and shout with all my might
I can hear a thousand voices making ready for a fight
I can ride through Colorado in a semi-trailer cab
I can hang around the truck stops and hear them joke and gab
I can hear them tellin' stories of the lives that they must lead
As they wonder how they'll make it with so many mouths to feed
I can see the little hobo as he shuffles down the street
I can hear him in the diner as he bums a bite to eat
For ten years he stoked the furnace 'til the factory whistle blew
Got laid off by automation boys and it put him on the road
And I met another fellow as I wandered all about
He was mining down at Heyser till his union sold him out
Yes, they worked him in the coalmines till his back and arms were sore
Then they put him on the blacklist boys and he can't go back no more
I can see the sharecrop farmer as he wipes his sweaty brow
He can see the crop is failing but it ain't his anyhow
I can see the dust cloud swirling on his played-out farmin' land
See him hunker down and let it trickle through his hand
I met a fine young negro lad about seventeen or so
He didn't like those southern jails but he felt that he had to go
Saying, "Mom and dad were Negros and my son will be one too
And I guess it's up to me because we've given up on you"
And as I passed an air force base a young man I did meet
With his shiny wings of silver and his uniform so neat
Saying, "I don't wanna bomb them sir; it fills me with dismay
But orders they are orders and you know I must obey"
Well I've been walking through this country and my eyes are open wide
And the things I've seen and heard you couldn't imagine if you tried
I've been listening to some people and one thing I understand
A great flood is arising fast and there's a rumblin' in the land