

# My Mother Was A Chinese Trapeze Artist

## The Decemberists

My mother was a Chinese trapeze artist  
In pre-war Paris  
Smuggling bombs for the underground.  
And she met my father  
At a fete in Aix-en-Provence.  
He was disguised as a Russian cadet  
in the employ of the Axis.  
And there in the half-light  
Of the provincial midnight  
To a lone concertina  
They drank in cantinas  
And toasted to Edith Piaf  
And the fall of the Reich.

My sister was born in a hovel in Burgundy  
And left for the cattle  
But later was found by a communist  
Who'd deserted his ranks  
To follow his dream  
To start up a punk rock band in South Carolina.  
I get letters sometimes.  
They bought a plantation  
She weeds the tobacco  
He offends the nation  
And they write, "Don't be a stranger, why hear."  
"Sincerely, your sister."

So my parents had me  
To the disgust of the prostitutes  
On a bed in a brothel.  
Surprisingly raised with tender care  
'Til the money got tight  
And they bet me away  
To a blind brigadier in a game  
Of high stakes canasta.  
But he made me a sailor  
On his brigadier ship fleet.  
I know every yardarm  
From main mast to jib sheet.

But sometimes I long to be landlocked  
And to work in a bakery.

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