

8 Below Zero

Zero

(after a first verse, not on the album)
Fifth and MacDougal, crossing the street,
Last rose of summer I happen[ed] to meet
She greeted my face with the back of her hand.
I checked it for blood, made no reprimand
It's been a long time, I said casually,
She said June 21st, 1983
In a voice with inflections heard in my dreams
A long time ago, not so long as it seems...
"I'll buy you some coffee," I said "Come inside.
Tell me who's living, tell me who's died,
Whatever happened-- what was his name?"
Like all of the rest, he went back where he came.

chorus

Eight below zero, too cold to snow
Eight below zero, nowhere to go
Eight below zero, face to the wind
It must have been written I'd see you again
I asked how it happened she still remained
She laughed without humor, "I'd ask you the same.
You climbed up the ladder, stepped off the top.
You never were someone who knew when to stop."
"I'll stop when I'm buried," I said in reply
And ordered two pieces of blueberry pie.
She picked out the berries, neglected the crust.
"Like you," she said, "I never knew who to trust"
We never knew when, we never knew how,
Never got cheated, and look at us now.
You've got protection, your gamble paid off
But the fact you came back shows it wasn't enough.

chorus

It's eight below zero, too cold to snow,
Catching her drift, I made motions to go
But she stuck out her foot. My balance collapsed,
Fell to my knees with my head in her lap.
I made up my mind to leave it right there,
Rightly or wrongly, I didn't much care.
Familiar perfume from the lap of her dress
Kingdoms have fallen defending much less.

chorus

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