

# Oh Sister

Dan Bern

They say you taught me how to talk  
I bet you wish you taught me how to stop  
You're far away now  
I wish I could take a walk with you someplace  
You explained me to our parents  
English wasn't their first language  
They spoke German, hated Germans  
Confusing times  
Oh sister  
Down Midwest backseat bumpy streets  
You sang my Beatles songs with me  
I sang your Broadway melodies  
Bad harmonies  
And where would Willie Mays have been  
Without Jackie Robinson?  
And who can say what I'd been  
Without you to lead the way  
After I showed some guys I could drink  
You picked me off the lawn, I think  
And led me to the kitchen sink  
Where I got rid of it  
Some nights I lay awake in awe  
As squinting through the dark I saw  
You peeling off your teenage bra  
The door slightly ajar  
Oh sister  
You lived just across the hall  
For eighteen summers, eighteen falls  
Until you went away to that  
Weird college in Wisconsin  
And where would Willie Mays have been  
without Jackie Robinson?  
And who can say what I'd been  
Without you to lead the way  
Trust yourself  
And you can do anything  
This I give to you  
May your heart purr like a bumblebee  
May all your backyards have a tree  
May you always be HIV negative  
I hope you meet a nice guy who  
Treats women better than I do  
I don't even care if he's a Jew or not  
Oh sister  
I remember in the temple hall  
At our dear father's funeral  
You sang like a nightingale  
One of his own songs  
And where would Willie Mays have been  
Without Jackie Robinson?  
And who can say what I'd been

Without you to lead the way

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